

Thoughts of  
BHAI ARDAMAN SINGH

Compiled by : Bhai Ashok Singh  
Institute of Sikh Studies  
Chandigarh

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**THOUGHTS OF BHAI ARDAMAN SINGH**

**COMPILED BY BHAI ASHOK SINGH**

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## FOREWORD

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Bhai Rup Chand was blessed by Guru Hargobind. The blessings continue, so that generation after generation, the family has produced stalwarts committed to the service of the Panth. Bhai Ardaman Singh, the author of this book, was amongst its most eminent scions. Like his illustrious father, Bhai Arjan Singh, who was a household name among Sikhs of his time, Bhai Ardaman Singh was always in the centre-stage of *Panthic* affairs, particularly in times of crisis. Nothing happened in the royal families of Phulkian States without his blessings. He was an eminent scholar, and not many understood the spirit of the religion of the Gurus as he did. Besides study of Sikh scripture and Sikh history, he had the advantage of modern education. His frequent travels abroad brought him in contact with other schools of religious thoughts, which further sharpened his understanding of religion. Because of his stature and scholarship, he was a much sought after figure in social, political, as well as religious circles. He expressed his views freely and frankly on all aspects of Sikh religion, and as a responsible intellectual, took care to keep a record of them. That is how we get the material for the present book, which deals with as many as 40 topics covering almost every major aspect of Sikh religion.

The thoughts included in this book were expressed at different times on different occasions, and were not intended to be chapters of one book. Each chapter stands independently on its own. In all chapters, however, the views expressed reflect the author's understanding of *gurmat*. To retain the freshness and flavour of expression, little editing has been done in the text as received. Bhai Sahib has written his own preface. However, an

introduction and a biographical note on him by Bhai Ashok Singh and S Sadhu Singh Deol respectively, have been added for the benefit of readers.

We are grateful to his illustrious son, Bhai Ashok Singh, who carefully preserved the record and has now agreed to part with this treasure for the benefit of scholars as well as the general public.

Bhai Ashok Singh is the present incumbent of the exalted position of Bhai Sahib of Bagrian. This honour was formally conferred upon him in 1995, by the Jathedar Sahib of Sri Akal Takht, after consultations with the heads of the erstwhile Phulkian States through the Maharaja of Patiala, and following a resolution passed by the SGPC, Amritsar. Like his ancestors, he is carrying the great tradition of his family forward with great vigour and commitment. We have already seen him in the centre-stage of Sikh affairs.

Bhai Ashok Singh is well-known in Sikh circles for his scholarship, friendly disposition, pleasant manners, and helpful nature. No wonder, he was entrusted by the Jathedar Sahib of Sri Akal Takht with the mission of forging unity among the various factions of Akalis, pulling in different directions in 1994. His contribution at that juncture was indeed historic. Besides his commitments at Bagrian, he is the Vice-President of the Academy of Sikh Religion and Culture, Patiala, a member of the Governing Council of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, the Sikh Education Society, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Council of Sikh Affairs, and Guru Harkishan Public School, and the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh.

An ardent advocate of Sikh identity, Bhai Ashok Singh is a firm believer of a great future for the Khalsa Panth. The present book is a gift for realisation of that goal.

In the end, I must express my sincere appreciation for Sardar Sadhu Singh Deol, but for whose keen interest in the book and active inputs, this book could not have seen the light of the day in time.

## BHAI SAHIB ARDAMAN SINGH BAGRIAN

---

Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh ji Bagrian was an eminent person in the realm of Sikh religion and Punjabi culture, a blend of grand human qualities and a great exponent of Sikhism.

He was born on 20th September, 1899, in village Bagrian, Distt. Ludhiana (now in Distt. Sangrur) and passed away in Chandigarh on 25th December, 1976. His father, Bhai Sahib Bhai Arjan Singh, was a famous *Raees* and was honoured among the Sikhs with the title of *His Holiness*. Mata Devinder Kaur was the mother of Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh. He had his schooling in Ludhiana and passed his B.A. degree from the Khalsa College Amritsar, in 1918. In the college he came into contact with Baba Gurdit Singh of Kamagata Maru fame. He helped the Baba (incognito) by getting him employed in the college. Baba Rori Singh was also given shelter at Bagrian where Sardar Sardool Singh Cavisher was living disguised as a *sadhu*.

Bagrian House at Shimla became the confluence of many enlightened Sikh scholars, thinkers and statesmen. Bawa Hari Krishan Singh, Principal Teja Singh, Giani Gian Singh, and Baba Prem Singh Hotimardan, used to stay there during the summer months. Bhai Kahn Singh of Nabha was almost like a member of the Bagrian family. Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh was nurtured and nursed in the company of such great Sikh scholars and in an atmosphere of soul stirring *Gurmat Sangeet*. He was an evolved soul and enlightened person of outstanding stature and eminence, completely committed to the cause of Sikhism.

Bhai Sahib was vehemently against idol worship. He has revealed through his writings and speeches that all the *banis* in *Dasam Granth* were not composed by Guru Gobind Singh ji. He



often used to say that Sikhi was being eroded by Brahminical rituals and that the vitals of Sikh way of life were being destroyed. He would exclaim, "If there are no Sikhs then how would Sikhi render service to humanity?"

Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh was essentially a man of religion. He never dabbled into the dubious intrigues of politics. For this very reason he was held in high esteem by all the political pundits of the day and the heads of other religions as well. The President of India, Dr Rajinder Parsad, the Prime Minister of India, Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri, all the Governors of Punjab, and even the Viceroy of India, graced the Bagrian House with immense pleasure.

The House of Bagrian has been in the service of the *Panth* almost for four centuries. The Gurus have blessed the House to render service to humanity and spread the teachings of the Gurus far and wide. Bhai Sidhu and Bhai Roop Chand, through their devotion and service to the Guru, brought the House into eminence. The benediction of *langar* was bestowed upon Bhai Roop Chand by the sixth Nanak, Guru Har Gobind Sahib. The House of Bagrian has been held in high esteem by all the Sikh Maharajas. From cradle to the cremation, all ceremonies of the Sikh Royals are performed by the Bhai Sahib of Bagrian.

*Sewa* (service) is one of the cardinal virtues of Sikhism. When the Guru bestowed this on Bhai Roop Chand he flourished beyond expectations. Bhai Roop Chand offered to Guru Gobind Singh services of his five sons, who were initiated as Khalsa. Two of them, Bhai Param Singh and Bhai Dharam Singh accompanied the Guru to Nanded. Bhai Dharam Singh had a son, named Dayal Singh, who founded a village, Dayal Pura. After Bhai Dayal Singh, Baba Guddar Singh and Mai Rajji brought glory to the House of Bagrian. The *langar* became famous as *langar* of Mai Rajji. As the story goes, on the advice of Baba Guddar Singh, Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind took the girl out of the pitcher marked for burial in the earth. He made the prophecy that the girl would give birth to a very brave man. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was her son and he visited Bagrian in 1807 in order to pay homage to Bhai Sahib Mohar Singh. Bhai Sahib Arjan Singh, on the request of Raja of Kapurthala, laid the foundation of Gurdwara Ber Sahib at Sultanpur Lodhi in 1937, and on the invitation of Sant Baba Attar Singh, he laid the foundation of Mastuana in 1919. The religious ceremony of Benaras Hindu

University was performed by Bhai Sahib Arjan Singh and the foundation stone of the religious wing was laid by Sant Attar Singh.

Singh Sabha movement owes a great debt to the House of Bagrian. When the movement gathered momentum then it was firmly established in Bagrian in 1895, and the Chief Khalsa Diwan was the outcome. Bhai Arjan Singh became its first president and remained so for 15 years. The SGPC set up a committee for the centenary celebrations of the Singh Sabha movement. Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh became the senior Vice-President of the Committee. Bhai Sahib also had the honour of being the President of the newly constituted Gurmat Academy which was an important organ of Kendri Singh Sabha. Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh actively participated in the drafting of the *Rehat Maryada* for the Khalsa Panth. He had profound knowledge of Sikhism, and was considered an authority on Sikhism. He was a brilliant exponent of Sikh identity and Sikh Panth.

Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh was deeply interested in *Gurmat Sangeet*. Under his guidance, the Punjabi University, Patiala, recorded and preserved the traditional and modern modes of *kirtan*, and a book containing 492 *shabads* in old compositions (ਫੀਤ) was researched and published by the University. Bhai Sahib authored many tracts on *kirtan* and chaired several seminars. He was given the unique honour of being the chairman of the selection committee for the *granthis* and *ragis* of Harmandar Sahib. He was an excellent speaker in English as well as Punjabi language. Whenever we think of Bhai Ardaman Singh of Bagrian, we are reminded of the following famous lines of Shakespeare :

*His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, 'This was a man !'*

August 18, 1999

Sadhu Singh Deol

## INTRODUCTION

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The following chapters on various aspects of Sikhism come from a realised soul, whom we can aptly term as a true Gursikh, who lived and practised the Sikh way of life as envisaged by the Sikh Gurus. It is the essence of a lifetime as experienced by him.

Although written a quarter of a century back, yet the book could not be presented earlier to the *Panth* to which it rightly belongs. May be it was ordained to become a homage to the Great Master, the purveyor of *Amrit*, ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼, ਬੁਤ ਸ਼ਿਕਨ, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, on the 300th anniversary of the birth of his beloved Khalsa.

To understand Sikhism in its original precept it is essential, nay imperative, to understand the difference between this new religious thought and the ones existing at the time when Guru Nanak undertook his mission. His very first words, ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ, are indicative of the fact that whatever he was to preach was independent and separate from the prevalent doctrines. Later in *Gurbani* it was made clear in unambiguous terms :

ਹਮਰਾ ਬਰਗਰਾ ਰਹਾ ਨਾ ਕੋਊ ॥

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਛਾਡੇ ਦੇਊ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ...

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਜੇ ਲਿਖਿ ਦੀਆ ॥

ਛਾਡਿ ਚਲੇ ਹਮ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਲੀਆ ॥੩॥

He (Nanak) meant thereby that all human beings are brothers and sisters, being the scions of one Almighty God. It was wrong to segregate them into different groups and sects whose followers keep on quarrelling with one another. The Guru said :



ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥  
ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

and :

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ॥

Very few thinkers and writers come out of the Hindu idiom of thinking, thereby, negating the very efforts and the mission of the ten Masters. No doubt Sikhism originated from a depressed and repressed Hindu society, but it is not Hinduism, nor a sect thereof. Christianity and Islam sprang from Jewish stock, but we cannot call a Christian or a Muslim a Jew. Just as Lord Christ was born a Jew, so was Guru Nanak born a Hindu. But he broke the shackles of Hinduism in a single stroke when he refused to wear the sacred thread (ਜੰਜੂ).

Major points of Sikhism, like unicity of God, brotherhood of man, negation of incarnation (ਅਵਤਾਰਵਾਦ), rejection of idol worship, etc., take Sikhism away from the Hindu thought. Here I can venture to say that these basic principles take Sikhism closer to Islam. Gurus were messengers and not God-incarnate, as they themselves said :

ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥

and :

ਕਹਿਯੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਸੁ ਭਾਖਿ ਹੋ । ਕਿਸੁ ਨ ਕਾਨ ਰਾਖਿ ਹੋ ।

Even in the way of life which the Gurus have laid down for a Sikh, we find that concepts of congregational prayer, casteless, classless society, are alien to Hindu thought. These again take us closer to Islamic society. In writer's words, 'Sikhism is antithesis of Brahminism.' Sikhism is a social religion based on ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ and ਜਹਾ ਜਹਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤਹਾ ਤਹਾ ਰਛਿਆ ਰਿਆਇਤ ।

Another important point to be kept in mind while reading *Gurbani* and understanding Sikhism is the one spirit in ten forms (ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ).

Vested interests today are trying to divide the *panth* into Sikhs of such and such Guru. Only a few would say they have taken *Khande da Pahul*. It is today from such and such *sant*, *sadh* or *dehra*, who in turn preach their own *maryada* which further divides the Sikhs. The authority of Akal Takht as centre of Sikhism is dissipating. There are Singhs who though overtly *Amritdhari*, do

not even accept *karah parsad* prepared by another sect, though *Amritdharis*. It can be said with certainty that the subsequent nine Gurus have said or done nothing that does not emanate from Guru Nanak. There is difference between Nanak and Guru Nanak. Nanak is the spirit (ਜੋਤ) that pervaded the ten forms and now is with us in the form of Guru Granth Sahib (ਗੁਰਸ਼ਬਦ). Guru Nanak Dev was the first Guru, the founder of Sikhism. Various historical facts would support the fact, the thought, that Sikhism has evolved in 200 years under guidance of one spirit in ten forms. A seed sown by Nanak bore fruit and the crop harvested on Vaisakhi 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Nanak, with a sword, steel of which was provided by Guru Nanak Dev. Remember the *Panj Piaré* came from places which were never visited by Guru Gobind Rai. The seed of Sikhism there was sown by Guru Nanak. *Panj Piaré* were the fruit. Similarly, the oft quoted line about Guru Gobind Singh, ਅਪੇ ਗੁਰ ਚੇ ਲਾ, needs deeper understanding. Guru Nanak bowed before his successor Bhai Lehna, while passing on Guruship. Continuing the tradition set by Guru Nanak and followed by his successor Gurus, Guru Gobind Rai bowed before *Panj Piaré* and sought *Amrit* to become (Guru) Gobind Singh. He in turn completed the transfer of Guruship to the Khalsa under the aegis of Guru Granth Sahib at Nanded, thereby giving the concept of *Granth-Panth*. Writer terms it as 'one Guru one movement'. It should suffice to make an understanding mind realise the continuity of the mission of the ten Gurus. Guru Nanak says :

ਅਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

Guru Gobind Singh repeats the same as :

ਤਬ ਥਾ ਅਬ ਹੈ ਆਰੈ ਹਵੈ ਹੈ ।

On Vaisakhi, the Tenth Nanak seeks head on palm with a drawn sword. Culmination of Nanak's mission can be seen in the paintings which show the *Panj Piaré* with their heads on their hands, offering these to Guru Gobind Singh who holds a drawn sword, with the caption :

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥

ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥

It is commonly said and believed that Guru Gobind Singh

turned the Sikhs into militants. Thus, today many pseudo-Sikhs like to be called Sikhs of only nine Gurus and get a shiver up their spine (if they have any) at the very mention of Guru Gobind Singh's name. But, in fact, the turning point was the sixth Guru taking up arms. Initiation by *Amrit* on Vaisakhi 1699 was not a turning point, because most of the battles like ਭੰਗਣੀ, ਨਦੌਣ, were fought much before that.

Bhai Ardaman Singh did not subscribe to this thinking in terms of 'militant and non-militant' Sikhs. He was of the view that it was a movement initiated by Guru Nanak with a clear objective to create a man, a nation, which should take up arms to defend itself, its society, its religion, from the soulless multitudes of his time. It was essential to first preach and make man understand and realise, just like striking the fine edge of a wedge to split a boulder. You do not provide weapons to a recruit on day one. It is done only after he goes through a rigorous training and when found fit to handle the same with skill and discretion. Sword is the same in Guru Gobind Singh and Aurangzeb's hands, but we know the difference as to how these were wielded. Battles fought before Vaisakhi 1699 were the tests.

It was in 326 B.C. that Alexander the Great invaded what we now call India and ever since it has been a one way traffic of invasions on India. Ironically the mountains over which the invaders came, came to be known as *Hindukush*.

With physical slavery of the masses came the worst thing that can happen to a man : mental slavery. No body had the moral courage and guts to speak against oppression.

ਅੰਧੀ ਰਯਤਿ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਹੂਣੀ ਭਾਹਿ ਭਰੇ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ॥

and :

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥

From that hopeless, helpless mass of people, Guru Nanak's mission was to create, develop and evolve the He-man, ਮਰਦ ਅਗਮਤਾ.

This slavery of a thousand years could not be unshackled overnight by mere preaching. All the Gurus lived the way of life which they preached as any other man. They suffered with their followers, and showed the way of living an honourable life and



also laying down their life for a principle, honour and dignity :

ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਥੀ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ ॥

and :

ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਨੈ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਣ ਮੈਂ ਤਬ ਝੂਝ ਮਰੈਂ ।

The first word of protest against the oppressive ruler came from Guru Nanak :

ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ

ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ ੧ ॥

He was the first human rightist and had the guts to call Babar a *jaaber*. He courted arrest with the rest as one of them. Guru Hargobind Sahib did not come out of jail leaving his fellow prisoners to languish. This earned him the honorific of ਬੰਦੀ ਛੋਡ.

Bhai Sahib used to say, as he believed, that when the fifth Guru, realised that his *sangat* was ready morally to face the unjust, oppressive rule, he decided to make his son, *Bal* Hargobind, don arms. According to my father, ਹੁਣ ਹੋਆ ਹੁਕਮ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਦਾ, was the milestone and turning point in the history of evolution of Sikhism. It was indicative of the readiness. Guru Arjun Dev himself defied the Mughal ruler by giving protection to Khushro and providing him passage through his territory. It was an act of courage and defiance of authority unthinkable at that time.

He reiterated the concept of *Takht* which had already been given by his predecessor Gurus :

ਤਖਤਿ ਬਹੈ ਤਖਤੈ ਕੀ ਲਾਇਕ ॥ ... ਤਖਤਿ ਸਲਾਮੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ ॥

and :

ਤਖਤਿ ਰਾਜਾ ਸੋ ਬਹੈ ਜਿ ਤਖਤੈ ਲਾਇਕ ਹੋਈ ॥

The message, the last message to his son *Bal* Hargobind, that he sent before going to Ravi makes matters amply clear. He said :

ਵੈਰਾਗ ਨਹੀ ਕਰਨਾ ।

ਸਸਤ੍ਰਧਾਰੀ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਤਖਤ ਤੇ ਬੈਠਣਾ ।

ਯਥਾ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਫੌਜ ਰਖਣੀ ।

Reading history deeply with a discerning mind one would realise that when *Bal* Hargobind ascended the *gaddi* he was offered a sword not ਸੋਹਲੀ, and when he demanded another, a similar one was produced. One thing is clear, there were two similar swords

made for the particular occasion. Second and even more important is that Guru Hargobind was given a military training and made fit to wear and wield two swords weighing 22 ਸੋਹ each. It leaves no scope for doubt that Guru Arjun Dev himself prepared and got him trained in the martial arts. And it was done under the able guidance of Baba Budha ji.

If any one Guru is to be mentioned, it was Guru Arjun, the apostle of peace, ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਦੇ ਪੁੰਜ, who turned Sikh movement towards a militant one, capable of armed struggle against oppression of both ruler and the priest.

The concept of ਸੰਤ-ਸਿਪਾਹੀ, Saint-Soldier, is also indicative in Guru Nanak's compositions (ode, ਵਾਰ, which came to India with Alexander, till Guru Nanak's time was used to inspire valour, narrating the valorous deeds of different warriors, Guru Nanak used this martial mode of music for worship).

The *Khanda* — double-edged sword — united one edge of *miri* with the other of *piri*. The two swords that were prepared by Guru Arjun Dev for his successor to proclaim ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ were blended into one *Khanda* that was used to prepare *Amrit*. This was the evolution of Khalsa, completed on Vaisakhi 1699.

To grasp the gist of this book, one should know that Bhai Sahib was a fundamentalist, with a modern outlook. This was fortified by his close association with people like Principle Teja Singh ji, who used to spend his summer with us at Shimla. After Partition, great Sikh historian, Baba Prem Singh ji Hotimardan, stayed with us for quite some time. Before going to college and after returning home I used to attend their conversations and discussions. One small incident would be quite in place here. One morning at one such sitting Principal Sahib said, “ਬੱਚਿਓ! ਅੱਜ ਸਿਨੇਮਾ ਹੀ ਵਿਖਾ ਦਿਓ।” The movie he wanted to see was *Quo Vadis* - based on Lord Christ's life. Referring to his professor (Bhai Jodh Singh ji), he said that latter once said that he had never seen a movie to which Principal Teja Singh had replied, “ਤਾਂ ਕੇਹੜੀ ਮਲੂ ਮਾਰ ਲਈ, ਇਹ ਭੀ ਤਾਂ ਅਕਾਲਪੁਰਖ ਨੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਹਨ।”

This was living the *Gurbani* concept of ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ। He was so engrossed in the plot of the picture

that he cried throughout seeing the tortuous plight of Christians. These two were not always as serious as the subjects of the discussions were. Once Principal Sahib in a lighter vein but making a point said : ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਬੜੀ ਔਛੀ ਤੇ ਉਚੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਸ ਪੈ ਗਈ ਹੈ ।

I think this holds true more so today than at that time. But it seems that he was not happy even in those days about how Sikhs lived and projected Sikhism. He writes, "Sikhism is anti-thesis of Brahminism." Bhai Sahib was firmly of the view that Sikhism is a separate independent religion. He used to say Sikhism is closer to Islam in principles, while Sikhs have become closer to Hindus. Bhai Sahib's last public appearance in the service of the *Panth* was on 23rd December, 1976. I would like to mention what happened with the university high-ups here. Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies had invited Bhai Sahib to read a paper on the theme of *Guru Nanak's Solution of National Unity and Integration*. This was submitted to the university as customary. He was asked to delete the line "into the main all-assimilating saline ocean of Hinduism" from the following paragraph :

"When the Aryans, Dasyus, Pishachas, Hunas, Yueh Chis, Sakas, etc, came to India, they settled in the country with an idea to remain here and become one of the people who were already here. In due course, they lost all sense and features of alienism and became Indians. Along with their language and cultures, which mainly centred upon the modes of dining and wiving, these little streams merged, lock, stock and barrel, *into the main all-assimilating saline ocean of Hinduism ...*"

This deletion he declined to do and asked for the return of the manuscript. Deadlock carried on till the change of guards. Under the new Vice-Chancellor, Mr R C Paul, the paper was approved and then read as it was. It was so much appreciated that the then Chief Minister, who was presiding over the function asked the University to have it translated into other languages. But the working of the University is well-known to the Sikh-watchers. Those who have known Bhai Sahib know him as a man of mellow temper and sweet words and his thoughts were to be treated

like this.

He, like his father, was strongly against pictures (ਮੂਰਤਿ) of Gurus. He said it tantamounts to idol worship. In 1975 when the Punjab government was celebrating Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom and wanted to have a painting done for the occasion, he threatened to walk out of the meeting saying, 'How can one aspire to draw a picture of one he has not seen or met'.

He was of the firm view that *kirtan* was the only way of worship in Sikhism. He often said that otherwise the entire Gurbani would not have been composed in *ragas*. Some of the *ragas* in Guru Granth Sahib are new to Indian music (ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀਆ ਸੰਗੀਤ) such as *Asa-Tilang*.

He himself became a student of Mahant Gajja Singh of *Gurusar Sudhar*, a noted musician of his time. Mahant Ji often came to Bagrian for the purpose. (It won't be out of place to mention that, according to Giani Gurdit Singh, other prominent students of Mahant ji were Bhai Kahn Singh of Nabha and Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala). Bhai Ghasita (ਭਾਈ ਘਸੀਟਾ), a known *ragi* of his time, was enrolled with my grandfather.

Yet another *ragi* of fame of the time who added to father's knowledge of *kirtan* was Bhai Jawala Singh of *Thathe Tibey* (ਠੱਟੇ ਟਿਥੇ).

He was not of the habit of keeping knowledge to oneself. He wanted it to be institutionalised to be preserved and spread. When Punjab government instituted Bhai Mardana Award, Bhai Sahib was asked to select *ragis* for the award. A number of sittings were held where *ragis* of the time presented their talent.

A solid contribution that he made in the field of *kirtan* was that he persuaded Punjabi University, Patiala, to record *kirtan* of all known *ragis* of the time.

At his request and suggestion the University commissioned Bhai Avtar Singh and Bhai Gurcharan Singh (sons of Bhai Jawala Singh, mentioned earlier) to record and annotate old traditional compositions (ਗੀਤ) of *shabads*. This book ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਗੀਤ ਰਤਨਾਵਲੀ which has 492 compositions annotated, was released after Bhai Sahib's death, in 1980.

Due to Bhai Sahib's position as a non-political personality, twice politicians had requested him to convey some ideas to the Akali leadership.

During the *Punjabi Suba* agitation, Late Sardar Partap Singh Kairon requested Bhai Sahib to advise the Akali leadership that areas like Faridabad and Sonapat which were revenue earning towns, would be excluded, that whatever was to be left, warranted revenue remission every alternate year, and that the remaining truncated Punjab would not be financially viable and would leave no scope for further expansion.

On the day Akalis launched *morcha* at Amritsar against the emergency in July, 1975, Bhai Sahib was requested to talk to Akali leadership and convey to them that emergency was clamped on entire India and not Sikhs alone. Further that it was a critical time when Sikh / Akali demands could be favourably considered and settlement acceptable to Sikhs could be reached. The proposal was duly conveyed to the Akali leaders whose response was not encouraging.

The partners in *morcha* deserted them and Akalis were left alone to face the music. Consequences which followed, every one knows.

Had any such settlement been reached the situation today would have been a lot different. But it now remains as one of the Ifs of history. Bhai Sahib's services to the *Panth* were recognised and honoured posthumously by SGPC at the *Vishav Sikh Sammelan* and by the Chief Khalsa Diwan at Amritsar.

Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh was a true Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh, with the twin characters of *Sant-Sipahi* and the third dimension of scholarship infused by the tenth Master. Bhai Sahib fought against the overt and covert attacks, inroads of Brahminism to his last breath in order to maintain the independent identity of Sikh *Dharam*. He lived up to the commitment ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਨੈ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਣ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਬੂਝ ਮਰੈ ।

For him life was a battlefield against Brahminism.

Finally, I will like to thank Dr Kharak Singh without whose encouragement and help, this book may not have seen the light of

the day. Not he alone but his entire family was there to cooperate and help with a smile.

The person who kept me on the right track, advising me to stick to and carry on the legacy of my ancestors' service to the *Panth*, keeping away from the quagmire of politics is Sardar Inderjit Singh Jaijee.

I am humbly proud to be a member of the Institute of Sikh Studies where I learn so much from the galaxy of prominent Sikh scholars. To them all I owe my thanks.

*August 18, 1999*

Bhai Ashok Singh  
*Bagrian*



BAGRIAN HOUSE  
SHIMLA

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## PREFACE

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Plagiarism has done greatest harm to the image of Sikhism. Sikh theologians and historians in the past were generally brought up with a base of studies of one or the other school of thought prevalent amongst the Hindus and the Muslims. Sikhism was, therefore, naturally projected through tainted and blurred glasses. Happily the writers and scholars nowadays have begun to lift the haze and give a clear vision of Sikhism. Though some are still struggling under the old obsession and have a lurking intention to please and appease the ruling class, the renaissance that is being brought about is very heartening and necessary to show the correct image. In this book, I have attempted to describe Sikhism as I have understood it.

Sikhism is our way of life, our *dharam*. It is not based on any set of *mantras*, rules and laws, edicts or commandments as such. No importance is given in the Sikh way of life to any physical austerities, rituals, formalism, acrobatic postures, fasts or ablutions, trances or talismans, pilgrimages, signs or penances. Numbering of prayers, counting of beads, mechanical reading of scriptures, attainment of supernatural powers, show of miracles or magic, even charities and alms, celibacy or renunciation, going naked and *karam kand*, have no place in Sikhism. The Sikh way of life bypasses all such exhibitionery rituals, self-suffering, superstitions and spiritual stunts and religious hypocrisies. It steers clear of esoteric introversions and cobwebs of castes and creeds, *Varanashram*, incarnations, idolworship, and other such dogmas and hollow philosophies.

The crux of this way of life is to control and mould the human mind so that it gets into complete harmony with the Will of the Creator. This can be achieved by submerging our ego completely into the Will of the Supreme Being, both explicit (ਹੁਕਮ) and implicit (ਰਜਾ), and extinction of I-am-ness (ਹਉਮੈ). This, therefore, can very well be called Satguru's way of harmony and action.

This way of life took full two hundred years to blossom and evolve fully. Guru Nanak Dev sowed the seed towards the end of the fifteenth century. His eight successors nurtured, cultured, cultivated, and fortified it. After 200 years of meticulous planning and preparation, the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, brought it to fruition in 1699 when the Guruship was entrusted to the Khalsa under the suzerain direction of *Gurbani* enunciated in Guru Granth Sahib. The Spirit and Light are to be received from *Gurbani* and its implementation in actual life was left to the Khalsa for all time to come. The omniscience and dynamic thinking of the Guru has provided a living organism with instructions to grow and prosper perpetually. With the omnipresence of *Shabd* Guru always providing Light and Instruction, Khalsa functions as an institution in itself and is capable of propagating, adjusting, expanding and functioning without depending on or waiting for emergence of any prophet or *avtar* to show the way. The delegation of Guruship in 1699 to *Panj Pyaras*, as representatives of the Khalsa, under the supreme spiritual overlordship of *Gurbani*, laid down that there will be no personality cult amongst the Sikhs and that there will be joint leadership, joint responsibility, and joint action.

Harmony has first to be established in our individual self. Guru Nanak Dev too aimed at resurrecting, reforming and rebuilding the individual's personality and character. Harmony has to be created in our mind, soul and body. Harmony is also necessary among our functioning organs, will and intellect.

No less is harmony desirable in the family — harmony between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters and so on. Instead of competing with each other, or having reservations and individual axes to grind, a family knit together with understanding, love and harmony carries decisive weight,



commands respect, and leads to glory and success in every sphere of life. It is more necessary today than ever before.

Harmony has to be extended next to the social circle, to friends and relatives and all those with whom we come in contact and have dealings with. It has to be spread in village and town, and in the community as a whole. Harmony is essential for preservation of culture, tradition, integrity and defence of the country. The ideals of one world and brotherhood of man can only be achieved by bringing about harmony. It is only harmony which can bring about world peace.

For improvement of economic conditions of the masses and uplift of the country, it is necessary to boost production. To achieve this purpose, harmony between the employer and the employee, the brain and the instrument, the executive and the worker, the tenant and the financier/owner, is of utmost importance.

Above all, most important and essential is harmony with the Will of the Supreme Being. That is, the spiritual height where alone we can get peace of mind and stability. It is there that we get into perfect harmony and rhythm with nature where the Creator is seen in action, and which affords us joy in life and eternal bliss. The way to achieve this goal is through *simran* and *kirtan*. Hopes, when not fulfilled, and fears of happenings that we do not wish for or desire, cause frustration and distress and shake the equilibrium of our minds. *Simran* and *kirtan* lift us above hopes and fears, and our ego (ਹਉਮੈ) is vanquished through the *Shabd* :

Freeing from hope and fear burn the ego by means of the *Shabd*.

ਆਸ ਅੰਦੋਸੇ ਤੇ ਨਿਹਕੇਵਲੁ ਹਉਮੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਜਲਾਏ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮ : ੧)

At this stage we realise our insignificance and helplessness as compared to the omnipotent universality of the *Akalpurkh*. The human soul is just like a drop in the ocean of the unfathomable and the incomprehensible Universal Soul. As a consequence, we arrive at a cross-roads : One leads to utter helplessness, frustration, pessimistic inaction, renunciation, fatalism, and all that sort of negative bewailing and remorse. This course has meant slavery and all the suffering that the Indian sub-continent underwent by

succumbing to this apparently easier way. The other way is that of action, service, optimism, and taking pleasure in doing good to others. Sikhism shows this latter way of positive action. We formulate our own *karmas*. That is our responsibility. *Karma* cannot be created by inaction. It results from our actions only. Action, therefore, is an essential part of life. If our actions are approved, the Master's Grace will liberate us from the labyrinth of *karma*. As long as life lasts, action must continue. There is no escape from it and there is no place for *sanyas* (renunciation) in the Sikh way of life. It is usually said that Guru Nanak was a prophet of peace. Unless properly understood, it is likely to cause confusion in the appraisal of the revolutionary evolution that the Satguru brought about. Peace of mind is spiritual harmony which is our aim. But peace in worldly life means *status quo*. *Status quo* means static subjection to whatever happens. At that time it would have meant acceptance of subjugation and conditions of serfdom. This was against the Guru's teachings and the tenets of Sikhism. Satguru has stressed upon living a life of constant struggle and continued activity for advancement and betterment. The tenth Guru has himself prayed :

When the end comes,

May I die fighting in the thick of the battle.

ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਨੈ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਣ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋਂ ।

In *Var Majh*, Guru Nanak says :

By talking and discussing, you cannot reach heaven.

Deliverance can only be had by living an active truthful life.

ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ, ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥

Satguru has enjoined upon us to live a life of action, and to integrate spiritual, intellectual, social, and political activity. This way, therefore, devolves on us responsibilities to be fulfilled and duties to be performed. These include both spiritual and worldly.

The first responsibility to be fulfilled is our duty, *dharm*, towards the Creator. This is done through *simran*, which means remembrance, i.e., perpetual awareness of the presence of the Omnipotent Sustainer of the Universe. This means the realisation

of the presence of the uncreated Creator in us and our existence in Him.

Our next duty is towards Satguru. The place of the Guru in Sikhism is next to God. To get enlightenment and guidance, the Guru is essential. All the gems and jewels lie inherent and hidden in us. They are only waiting for the touch of the Guru to be energised and shine (ਮਤਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਰਤਨ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਮਾਣਿਕ ਜੇ ਇਕ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਣੀ ॥). We have only to take refuge under Satguru's Lotus Feet with faith and devotion. If we persist with single-mindedness, in spite of the tests the Guru puts us to, the loving Guru will embrace and come to function in us. Along with the Guru come his force, strength, and powers. But we have first to perform our duty to grasp the Guru's Feet and surrender our mind and intellect by offering our 'head' to him. Entrusting our body, mind, possessions, and everything to the Guru and abiding by His Will, we get Realisation (ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਚਿਪਿ ਗੁਰ ਕਉ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਾਈਐ ॥).

Then we have the responsibility to fulfil towards the Sikh Community as a whole, known as the *Panth*. The Khalsa is the cream which emerges to the top after going through gruelling tests. Being entrusted with the Guruship, the Khalsa is the image of the Guru himself. To preserve its image and identity and keeping its colours high and aloft, is a Sikh's foremost and sacred duty. *Keshas* (uncut hair) are a spiritual link with the Guru. It is *keshas* that have saved the Sikhs from extinction. Otherwise, they would have been assimilated by the intolerant Hindu majority long ago. This responsibility has to be fulfilled even with our blood if need be.

No less important are the responsibilities we have to fulfil towards our hearths and homes, our families and fellow beings, and the world at large where the Creator has sent us on specific duties. To be a good 'earner' and a prolific 'learner', so that we may have plenty and surplus with us to disburse and assist the needy and the deserving, is another important duty that the Sikh way of life devolves upon us.

To perform our duties and to fulfil our responsibilities we must have requisite capabilities and capacity. For this purpose, besides will and understanding, ways and means, intellect and

knowledge, physical fitness is of utmost necessity. It is only in a sound body that a sound mind can properly function and harmoniously exist.

Satguru's mission, and so the ideal of a Sikh, is to uphold and advance righteousness, to emancipate the good, 'the saint in us' (ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਥਾਰਨ ।) and to extirpate evil and evil-doers root and branch (ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੋ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ ।). To fulfil this mission, for self-preservation, and preservation of our way of life, our *dharam* and traditions, for self-defence and protection of our institutions, traditions, and freedom, organisation and discipline are most essential. These essentials were incorporated in this way of life from the very beginning. Sikhism broke with ascetic traditions at the very start. Guru Nanak Dev had himself established missionary centres even in far flung places like Ceylon, Central India, Assam, Multan and Baghdad. His selection of a successor was also a significant step in this direction. This established a precedent which continued till the ascendance of the Eternal Guru, Granth Sahib. Our way of life is not individualistic with interest hovering around our person only. This individualism had been a bane of Indian civilisation. Our aims, therefore, are to be achieved in *sangat* and not by any way of renunciation. This is why *sangat* (community gatherings) and *pangat* (community dining) are two main pillars on which the edifice of our way stands with perfect harmony all round.

Everything which is perceptible is the manifestation of the Supreme Master. He can be perceived in His myriad and uncountable forms, while He is still beyond and One. It is in His manifest nature that His Will (*Hukm* and *Raza*) can be observed in action.

In *Asa-di-Var* the Satguru says :

It is Your Will functioning in Nature, by which we see and hear and are conscious of fear and comfort.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਦਿਸੈ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਭਉ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਰੁ ॥

The nether regions, the heavens, and all the forms in creation come under the course of Thy Nature.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਪਾਤਾਲੀ ਆਕਾਸੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥

So do the *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, the Semitic scriptures and all the schools of thought.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

Under Your Will come the ways of eating, drinking, dressing and all the ways of love and affection.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥

Thy Nature prevails in all the species, genera, the animal kingdom and colours.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜਾਤੀ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਰੰਗੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜੀਅ ਜਹਾਨ ॥

Thy Nature works in the virtues and evils of men and in their feelings of honour and dishonour.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਨੇਕੀਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਬਦੀਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਮਾਨੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥

It is Your Nature which works in the wind, water, and fire, as well as the particles of the earth.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਪਉਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਖਾਕੁ ॥

It is all Your Will and Nature that work everywhere. You are the Creator and Master of Nature. Your Name is the holiest of the holy.

ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਾਇਰੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪਾਕੀ ਨਾਈ ਪਾਕੁ ॥

Says Nanak, Thou beholdest and pervadest all things under Thy Command and workest most intelligently.

ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਵਰਤੈ ਤਾਕੇ ਤਾਕੁ ॥੨॥

Our actions, movements, aspirations, ceremonies and *maryada* have to be in complete harmony and rhythm with the workings of Nature. Anything opposed to it will not be advisable in our way of life. It will strike a discordant, incoherent, and jarring note, which must be stopped. Under the influence of other ways of life, especially the Hindu way, our *maryada* and most of our connected actions have become corrupt and jarring, and are screaming in disharmony which call for being corrected and brought in tune and harmony with nature. For instance, the whole nature, the stars, the earth, and ancient instruments and machines like the Persian wheels, the manual wheat-grinders, oil-mills, ploughing, and every other thing goes round in anti-clockwise direction, by going towards the right. The Olympic tracks even nowadays go in the right, anti-clockwise, direction. In science the right is the

positive, active side, while left is negative. Sikhism is based on principles of positive action and mental and physical strengths. By going in the right direction we pay respect to the sacred steel hanging on the left also. But some of us, under Brahminical influence, while going round (*parikrama*) in sacrifice to the *Ishat Gurudev*, do so in clockwise direction. This is blatantly in disharmony and discord with nature. To give another instance, generally we find that the Sikhs pay their obeisance to Guru Granth Sahib, but treat it like Hindu idols. They love Punjabi, but care very little to read and know what is contained in the Holy Granth, and still less to follow the guidance and instruction the *Shabd* Guru imparts. Sometimes they act in insolent defiance of the very instructions they recite or sing in the *Shabd*, as is observed when some mimics of Hindu rituals offer *Arti* with burning candles and throwing flower petals on Guru Granth, in the Hindu way of worshipping the idol or honouring an individual. The *bani* they recite when doing so unequivocally and frankly forbids such actions. It describes the whole nature as offering *Arti* to its Supreme Master and instructs us to get into complete harmony with it. Sikhism is based on the conception of the Formless and Timeless Supreme Being. The Satguru being now the Guru *Shabd*, is also formless and timeless (ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ — *Nirankar*) and so is the way of worship which is solely and only the singing of the praises of the *Nirankar*. Thus, all the misconceptions about Sikhism are due to looking at the Satguru's way of life through tinted and borrowed glasses.

The mess we have made and our failure in the field of politics is also obviously due to our being confused about this way of life of ours. It is correct to say that in the Sikh way of life *dharam* and politics cannot be separated. But unless politics are kept subservient to *dharam*, we cannot justify our stand, and as long as we are not clear and definite about the image and shape of our way of life, our *dharam*, we will not be able to cope with modern politics which are getting more sophisticated and intricate every moment. We must first be clear and convinced in our mind, that the Sikh way of life, has an independent image and identity. We must wriggle free of the Hindu spell under which Sikhs have so far been working;

the idea, that the Sikhs were created for the protection of the Hindus or only to bring about reforms amongst the Hindus, which purpose has now been fulfilled and Sikhs should better merge back in the Hindu morass; the spell which created hatred in the Sikh mind for Muslims and Islam as a whole, although Sikhism is closer to Islam than to Hinduism as the Satguru's conception of God resembles more the monotheistic God of the Semitic religions than any of the gods connected with the polytheistic Hindu view, besides the community worship and other factors like castes and *Varanashram*. This nearness to Islam is reflected even in the Satguru's own words in *Zafarnama*, when he wrote to Emperor Aurangzeb that he had to thrash the turbulent hill people as they were idol-worshippers while he was an idol-breaker. It is only those who have never tolerated the existence of the Sikhs and Sikhism, who try to create the impression that Sikhism is only a satellite of Hinduism. Acceptance of such a deadly injunction can only mean slavery and serfdom for us or total extinction. There can be no hope of success in politics as long as we are not clear and convinced of our 'Panth' being '*nirala*,' distinct and independent.

The truth revealed by the Satguru is eternal and so are the human values propagated by him. This spirit and guidance is conserved in the Guru *Shabd* enunciated in the Guru Granth Sahib for all time to come. Under its sovereignty, the Guruship was entrusted to the Khalsa. This was because the *maryada*, the dealings, the behaviour, the policy, and living, has always been changing and will continue to change from time to time. This has to be coped with at all times whenever needed. The way of living which is static, unaccommodating, and unreasonably dogmatic and rigid, cannot last long. It gets extinguished by its own outdated stagnation. The Guru in the Khalsa is always alert and functioning. It is dynamic, always adjusting, and self-growing. It is fully capable of facing and getting over any eventuality at any time. Occasions for adjustment have always arisen and will always arise. The Sikh way of life itself has taken about two hundred years, the 16th and the 17th centuries, to evolve and take a final shape. Along with it, *maryada*, has also been changing and evolving. I can very well

visualize, for example, the Sikh congregations in cold, well-to-do Western countries assembling on chairs, keeping their feet warm, while Guru Granth Sahib is placed respectfully on a high pedestal with observation of full honours. It is cheapest to squat on the ground. In a poor country like India which cannot afford the luxury of having even a full covering over the floor everywhere, let alone chairs and other elaborate furniture, this may look odd and sound radical, but an eventuality like that cannot be ruled out. There will certainly be no harm or sacrilege in it. Generally people are conservative, and do not accept a change very readily. Above all we have the overriding presidency of the Guru *Shabd*. These are good enough insurances against frivolity, infidelity, frailty, opportunism, slavish submission, flattery, and other irreligious lapses. The Satguru did not found this way of life for only the Punjab or India or the Eastern Hemisphere. Being meant for the whole Universe, it must serve and be adaptable to all places, climes, and people.

To properly understand the Satguru's Sikh way of life, also called Sikhism, how it evolved during the 16th and 17th centuries and took its final form, it is necessary to keep in mind the continuity of the Guru in ten human forms and its dynamic existence and functioning in the Khalsa afterwards. Without doing so, some intelligent people, even Rabindra Nath Tagore, have drawn unintelligent conclusions and misled some clever thinkers like M.K. Gandhi, who taking the clue from Tagore, had the audacity to call Guru Gobind Singh a "misguided patriot" and after the partition of the country, uncovering his communalism, started denouncing the Sikhs in his daily propaganda prayer meetings. Not that he did not know the unequalled services of the Sikhs to humanity, but he could not conceal his intolerant, communal, and anti-Sikh feelings. Measuring with his own yardstick and equating the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, with Shivaji Marhatta, Tagore pronounced that Guru Gobind Singh fell from the high spiritual ideals of Guru Nanak and that Sikh society decayed because it took to the profession of arms. He particularly lamented that Sikhs did not conform to his notions of high ideals and did not produce any



painters, or dancers, or even poets, not knowing that all the Sikh scriptures and religious books and even some of the historical works are all written in poetry and set to music and rhythm the like of which has not been written so far. Sir Gokal Chand Narang, an ardent Arya Samajist, in his, *Transformation of Sikhism*, writes about Guru Gobind Singh that "Hereditary as the gift of poetry had been in his family, he developed a style of Hindi poetry which has remained unsurpassed since his times." Again he says, "He developed a class of warlike poetry, unknown in the Punjab before, which he turned to such a great account in rousing the dormant energies of the people." And he says further, "Verses of Gobind Singh forming an invocation to the Sword are among the finest of their kind to be met within any literature of the world." Any one who has a little sense to see things impartially, would straightaway note that the first brick of the Khalsa edifice which Guru Nanak laid with his teachings and dissemination of knowledge (*gian*) was in poetry and music. Both of these fine arts reached a stage of perfection during the time of his nine successors, untouched, unequalled and unparalleled so far. Music (*kirtan*) is the sole form of worship in Sikhism. No wonder it did not meet the expectations of Tagore and the like, as there is no place for femininity or feminine acts and guiles among the Sikhs.

Sir Gokal Chand Narang had rightly said in his *Transformation of Sikhism*, "Gobind himself, in fact, as well as his work, was the natural product of the process of evolution that had been going on ever since the foundation of Sikhism. The harvest which ripened in the time of Gobind Singh had been sown by Nanak and watered by his successors. The sword which carved the Khalsa's way to glory was, undoubtedly, forged by Gobind, but the steel had been provided by Nanak."

The essence of the Sikh way of life is to be an ascetic within (ਬਾਤਨ ਫਕੀਰੀ) and a prince without (ਬਾਹਰ ਅਮੀਰੀ). Arms mean protection to the weak and the poor, and destruction to the tyrant. We have to transcend our little egos and appearances, but not to renounce the world. This was the teaching the sixth Satguru imparted to Ram Das Samrath, the Maratha, in 1634. This Ram Das later on became

the spiritual guide of Shivaji Marhatta.

In this small book, salient features, essential factors, and important aspects are separately discussed. I have tried to be as brief as I could. But still some repetition of ideas and points could not be avoided as most of these notes were written on different occasions, at different times, and even for different purposes. In this respect I wish, therefore, to seek the reader's indulgence. I have also tried to quote lines from *Gurbani*, which are commonly known and used. This is an attempt to put my humble contribution also in lifting the haze and helping to present the Sikh way of life in its own independent lustre and unsullied crystal clear image. If I have been able to do a little bit, I should be grateful to my Gurudev for His Grace and Mercy.

Our connections with Sikhism and the *Panth* date back to the time of the sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind Sahib, when my ancestor Bhai Roop Chand grasped the Satguru's Lotus Feet and received unlimited blessings and boundless bounties. Ever since then it has been our proud privilege and honour to be at service of the Guru Panth to the best of our capacity and ability granted by the Satguru. My impressions of Sikhism, therefore, grew and developed in this background and atmosphere, family traditions and hereditary customs and living. Not that I feel I have said anything new; every guidance and instruction can be had from *Gurbani* on every aspect of life and from the history of two hundred years of the Guru period when the Satguru's ideas and teachings were implemented in actual life. But whatever I have said are the impressions that I have gathered. I have taken care to keep independent of any other school of thought. Still I do not claim to be perfect and incorrigible. If any learned friend makes any corrections, I will be deeply thankful for the loving interest taken to further improve my efforts.

*Ardaman Singh Bhaini*

Bhai Ardaman Singh

## THE BEGINNING

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The human mind has always been in need and in search of peace and tranquillity. From the very beginning it has been in quest of an anchor to stabilize and protect it from tides and terrors, storms and onslaughts, it faces in the life-struggle. All the great religions, *dharams*, sects and schools of thought aim at satisfying this human urge. All of them are meant to lead the human being to *Anandpur*, the place of peace and eternal bliss. "All roads lead to Rome," though they have different alignments, different layouts, and pass through different regions, countryside, and give different glimpses of beautiful sceneries and grim grand passes, and though some are smooth and well tarred, others are rough and rigid, all of them are, thus, in a way, together at the bottom and meet at the top. It is in between that differences and troubles lie. Political considerations and ambitions, social systems and rituals, selfish interests and rivalries, superstitions and mental inhibitions, tend to take them apart and create schisms and classes and get the gulf widened. But they are all laid out to reach the top. Some of them are circuitous and tough, some are short and straight, and some are difficult, while some are easy to tread. Some of them are full of obstacles and labyrinths, while some pass through wilderness and jungles full of ferocious and poisonous predators. Through some, people are able to pass, while in others, they get lost.

Looking back, we find that this urge and quest have been present in the human mind even in its very primitive stage. The human mind seems to have been endowed with intellect from the very beginning. This urge and quest changed form as human

intelligence grew, developed, and progressed. In the very early stages when human beings lived and moved in the wilderness like any other living being, they had to face obstacles, difficulties, dangers and risks. They had to struggle and fight for existence and sustenance.

In the beginning, obviously, the first stage was of fear. It was natural because in an immature and raw intellect, only elementary crude things get to be understood. So, in the beginning only natural happenings could have had their effect on human minds. For instance, the thunder of the lightning in the clouds, the heat emanating from the flames of fire, the fury of the storms and typhoons had their terrifying effects. As human beings moved unprotected in the wilderness and lived on vegetation, fruits, and flowers, or on what they could kill, they passed through difficulties and dangers beyond our conception. In that condition besides the natural happenings, they had to guard against poisonous crawlers and ferocious animals like tigers, leopards, elephants, bisons and snakes. These dangers combined with the unending struggles and efforts to fill the stomach. Consequently, the human mind searched for some refuge and protection. Naturally, therefore, in its helplessness it had to bow before these calamities. This led to the idea of some god being enraged and the worship of lightning, fire, storms, whirlwinds, lions, and snakes started. The next idea that flashed across the human intellect was that there were certain things which were useful and advantageous. For instance, the rays of the sun provided warmth against severe cold, the moon at night gave light in pitch darkness, the moonlit nights looked pleasant and enjoyable, and waters of the rivers washed off dirt and mud, while clean water quenched the thirst. This added to the things worth worshipping and the worship of sun, moon and rivers, as gods started.

In the same way when power of progeny was observed in the human organs, the worship of lingam began. Its worshippers now have started to try to explain that this lingam represents the Formless One (निर्वाक़र). But this argument is not convincing. There can be no possible Form whatsoever of the Formless One. And the

figures depicting the "sex postures", mentioned by Pandits Koka and Vatsyayan, that decorate the temples of Jagannath Puri, Khajuraho and some others in Southern India, speak loudly enough for themselves.

After this, when human intelligence progressed further, the idea of some power that kept the working of nature and creation in regular order and discipline, was generated. Without such a power running the whole show in proper and strict order and discipline, the whole creation would have shattered and scattered. This became the first concept of the Creator behind this creation, His manifestation. Because human intellect was still in its infancy, it could not go into deep and complicated ideas. It found easy answers to satisfy itself. The power behind the rains, behind the heat of the sun, and that of water and earth were all considered to be separate. In short all these different powers were considered to be different gods with different functions and began to be worshipped. The motive force behind all this being fear, the idea of seeking protection of that god who was directly concerned came into being. To seek his protection required efforts to please and appease a particular god. Then the question arose how to do this. The human findings, knowledge and approaches being very limited, the solution was found in offering what the human beings themselves liked and loved most. The first such item that struck the mind were things that were eaten and drunk. So they began to offer water to the sun and water mixed with other select eatables to fire, and milk to snakes. In this way many such customs came into being and some of them are still continuing. Similarly, when some destruction was done by storms and floods or by earthquakes or some epidemics caused widespread deaths, it was all considered to be because of some gods getting annoyed. Whenever there were some such happenings or calamities, these were considered to be due to the wrath of such god or goddess as *Sitla* or some ghosts and fairies. As every one had their own ideas, it became impracticable to enumerate the gods that were brought into existence.

With further development of human intellect, the question arose how to deal with such a frightful and powerful god as devil

(ghost or fairy). There being no anchor or reasoning capacity to pacify and tranquillise the mind which became so much terrified and shaken from its roots that people became inclined and in most cases, urged to offer in sacrifice what was dearest and nearest to them like their wives, children and even themselves. In this way, offerings in one form or the other have continued in almost every culture and school of thought, even after the human intellect made great and marked progress. In fact, this has been very effective to satisfy, pacify, and steady the mind.

We find that the hymns in the *Rig Ved* are mostly invocations to gods who were powers of nature personified. Thus, these gods can be divided into three groups; one pertaining to the high up (sky gods), the other to midway between (mid-air gods) and the third to the earth itself (*prithvi*). In the first category, there were gods like Mitra, Surya and Varuna, and in the second category, there were Indra, Vayu, Maruts, etc. In the third category came the Earth (*Prithvi*), Fire (*Agni*), and Soma Ras, etc. At that time the female god, Devi, was considered to be only one and that was Usha (Goddess of Dawn). Later on the number of gods was restricted to three, i.e., Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. At that time, the female goddess came to be known as Durga or Kali. In *Sam Ved*, we find mostly sacrificial hymns. In *Yajur Ved*, the stress seems to be mostly on formalism and ritualism; while in the *Atharva Ved* the hymns are mostly spells, charms, and sorcery, to get rid of ghosts, demons, enemies and diseases.

As intellect developed and progressed further, this terror from the calamities of nature and living beings that gave direct and crude shocks, was by and by replaced by the ideas of some power and strength that worked behind them. So the concept of some powers that could not be seen, prevailed. This imperceptible power came to be known as God (*Shakti*). This concept of God differed according to different countries, different conditions, different languages and different developments of human intellect. The names are also different according to these different ideas. And this appears to be the beginning of different religions, sects and schools of thought.

Those who were brave and valiant began to praise God as the All-Powerful and Almighty. Those who were savage and tyrant, considered Him to be a Terror who was cruel and who did not forgive any one. When someone was in dire need and this need was fulfilled, he called Him the Great Benefactor. To the learned, thoughtful, and farseeing persons, He appeared to be Knowledge Personified (*Gian Saroop*). And to those who loved luxury, enjoyment, and were easy going, He appeared to be a clarionet Player and a Dancer. Courageous knights and the compassionates observed him with quoit (*Sudarshan Chakkar*) in His hand. To them, He always appeared well-armed and riding a lion. Those who were weak and dejected, considered Him to be riding about on birds and harmless animals and even riding on rodents and mice. Some people considered Him immanent while others believed Him to be sitting on a throne in the seventh heaven. If some considered Him to be without parallel, others saw Him with various companions. Some considered Him to be issuing writs while sitting above and unconnected with creation, and some called Him Eternal, and also put *Parkirti* and spirits at the same level with Him. Some people became so engrossed with these different concepts and their philosophical arguments that they ignored the worldly aspect of life. While some stress so much on character building and good actions that they almost forget about the existence of the Supreme Being. If one was monotheist, the other divided the Supreme Power into three functionaries. If one considered Him All-Powerful, the other refused to believe in His very existence. Some loved while others rebelled against Him. Some people saw Him functioning and manifest in His Creation, while others repaired to forests and wilderness in His search.

In India, the development of *dharma* and religions took the same course. Human sacrifices, worship of the lingam and the effect of ghosts and spirits were prevalent amongst the early Indians called Dravidians. When the Aryans came, their learned leaders called *Rishis* etc., composed the *Vedas* in the Punjab and later on different philosophies came into existence. In Kapil's *Sankhya Shastra* only matter and soul were considered as eternal and God

(*Parmatma*) was not recognised. The *Karm* theory was depicted as working automatically. In *Nyaya* and *Vaisheshik Shastras*, the principles of duality were accepted. Patanjli in his *Yog Shashtra* lays stress on concentration, different practices, exercises and postures. It also explains the different ways to keep the body fit and obtain longevity and activate latent powers in human beings. As a consequence of the effects of this admixture of different thoughts and teachings of the *Vedas* and *Shastras*, the people remained concerned only with what is called *Karm Kaand*, ceremonial rituals, formalism and superstitions. As a reaction to this, Jain and Buddhism came into existence, and they raised the flag of rebellion against this hair-splitting.

The Vedic teachings had slid into being mere ceremonial ritualism at that time. The priest class, called Brahmins, were in charge of everything and they exploited their position in every way. To perpetuate their hold, the caste system was introduced to keep the masses divided in watertight compartments. This led to segregation of higher and lower castes. The high castes became aggressive and looked down on the lower ones; while the lower castes being kept illiterate and deprived began to hate the upper castes. As a consequence, we find that these divisions had so much separated the people that there could develop no such feeling as patriotism and nationalism in India. This ended in ruination and slavery for the country.

In the sixth century B.C., Jainism came into existence as a revolt against Brahminism. It preached four main principles — first not to injure life, second not to speak falsehood, third not to steal, and fourth not to possess anything. Later on, two more injunctions were added. One not to be immoral, second not to wear clothes. Jainism gave no place to God in its teachings. In 563 B.C., Mahatma Buddh, founder of Buddhism was born. Both Jainism and Buddhism were in a way rebellions generated by Kshatriyas against Brahminism. Buddhism protested and worked against expensive Brahminical rituals and bloody sacrifices. It mainly laid stress on pious living and practical ethics. It could also be said that it was more a social movement than a religious



one. Its main principle was that the world is full of sorrows, and our wishes and requirements, hopes and fears, put us into the cycle of life and death. If the desire for earthly things is killed, it results in emancipation (*nirwan*). Desires could be killed by following the path called *Arya Ashtangik Marg* (the eight-fold path); 1) Right faith, 2) Right thought, 3) Right speech, 4) Right means of livelihood, 5) Right action, 6) Right endeavour, 7) Right remembrance and 8) Right meditation. In Buddhism, we find that *karm* theory and transmigration of soul are the presiding principles, which function by themselves. It has not denied the existence of God as such; but in Buddhism, there is no importance, use, or necessity for Him.

As people were fed up with the exactions of Brahminism, Buddhism easily spread out in the sub-continent. In Ashoka's time, it became the state religion. This gave a fillip to it and it spread far and wide into the Eastern countries, China and Japan. Because of the lack of any Divine base or reliance on the Almighty, it turned out to be mainly a propagator of agnosticism and atheism.

Its principles of non-violence and renunciation evolved to such an extreme that people became absolutely helpless and weak, unable to defend themselves or their faith. Non-violence and renunciation cannot and do not fit in with a state and its governance. Along with it, there being no faith in the Almighty God, people lost reliance even upon themselves. Because people did not feel to be supported by the All-Powerful One, they were being knocked and rocked about like an anchorless boat. That is why, when Brahminism was revived by the ruthless efforts of the Shankracharya, they could not stand before its drive. By the 14th century A.D., Buddhism disappeared altogether from the subcontinent. Unfortunately, while taking away its bag and baggage, it left the country imbecile at the mercy of invaders, plunderers and adventurers from outside. We find that after that whoever took it into his head to invade India, he walked into it at his pleasure and conquered and plundered it. As a matter of fact, Ashoka's embracing of Buddhism may well be considered to be a noble personal achievement, but politically, renunciation of the

sword undid the glories of India that were. That day of the battle of Kalinga which Ashoka won after great bloodshed and which is glorified as the day of Realisation and Transformation, could very well be treated as the day of the beginning of the downfall of Hindu supremacy in India. After Ashoka, disintegration of Bharat started and its boundaries began to shrink and close in.

When Brahminism was revived, it had to face mostly the force of Buddhism. Buddhism and Jainism had several common features. But Buddhism had spread its roots more firmly and widely than the other. To wash away the effects of Buddhist teachings, Vyas Rishi composed *Uttar Mimamsa*. The philosophy of the *Uttar Mimamsa* and *Purv Mimamsa* set down the principles of One Supreme God. It said the "matter" (*parkirti*) and soul (*jiv*) ultimately are absorbed in *Parbrahm*. It also laid down that the whole of *maya* had its end and was, hence, untruth (*assatt*). This philosophy of Vedant was very effective and worked successfully in the beginning; but later on, it adopted several shapes. Under its effect some people began to consider themselves as "God" (*Brahm*) while others took everything to be "Nothing". As a result of this teaching, people lost all idea or feeling of neighbourliness, sympathy or mutual help and service or any love for their nation. In a way, this philosophy had its effect on thoughtful people like Wordsworth in Europe too.

Similarly, *Bhagwat Gita* also laid down the principles of one transcendent deity and this, it said, was Sri Krishna himself. Along with it, Vaishnav and Bhakti Marg also took their birth. But all these conceptions remained confined to God in some perceptible form (*Sakaar*). After driving out Buddhism from the land, Vedic Brahminism held the field. All the learning and knowledge was monopolized by the Brahmins. In fact, all the powers and driving force came solely under their control. People in general could only go to them and make requests and express their desires and make offerings. By and by, their control and power covered besides social and religious functions, the political and administrative field too. Ultimately, they turned out, in a way, to be king-makers. To make their hold permanent, the idea was hammered into the minds

and thinking of the common people that a family man cannot attain spiritual advancement or do any religious work which had been made too expensive for the common man.

This weakness was not confined only to Hindu society and Hinduism, but it had its effect on those who had come from outside and settled down in the country. Before the Muslims invaded India, there were others also who made inroads into the country and some of them like Scythians, Parthians, Sakas, Kushans, Gujjars and Huns settled down here. Those who settled down here were mostly assimilated into and absorbed by Hinduism. But later on, when the Mohammedan invaders came and settled down here, they could not be absorbed like others, though great effort was made to do so. This effort to assimilate them crossed not-required-limits during the period of Emperor Akbar, when Hindu rulers offered their daughters to the Mughal Emperor in marriage. To please and appease and win over the Emperor, they began to call Akbar an incarnation of Vishnu. Even a holy book was brought into being called *Allah Upnishad*. Yet, the Mohammedans retained a separate identity. But in spite of this, Hinduism had its effect on the Mohammedans too. Amongst them, like Brahmins, the power passed on into the hands of the *Mullah* and *Qazi*. Exhibitory ceremonials, rituals, superstitions, worship at tombs, talismans, etc., became common among them too. Class differences also became perceptible.

Whereas every Brahmin could not be a learned *Pandit*, similarly every *Qazi* and *Mullah* could also not be an *Alam*. To satisfy their ego and to show up their superiority, they began to find out and invent easy stunts and kept people in ignorance and misled them away from reality. Those who followed such leaders, their pitiable condition can very well be imagined. For them, the religious and spiritual duty boiled down to simply visiting some *Teeraths* or *Mecca*, the holy places, to make pilgrimages, have a dip in some 'holy' water, recite *Mantra* or *Nimaz* (which may not be understood by them at all), keep fasts, (*Vrat* and *Roza*) paying homage at crematoria or tombs, and request Brahmins or *Qazis* to read Scriptures, and invite them to their homes to repasts and offer

them the choicest of their produce and other valuables. There was no place for any meditation or building of character or living a noble and useful life.

Under the influence of such ignorance and misguidance, people groped in the dark and due to misconception of their *dharmik* duty, they became fanatics and began to hate the followers of religions other than their own, and committed barbaric atrocities.

This basic weakness and misguidance caused social, economic and political degradation in India. People became self-centred, selfish and materialistic, being cut off from spiritual and religious functions of life which were restricted to the priest class. In their helplessness and anchorlessness, people lost confidence in themselves and also the power and will to defend themselves, their hearths and homes, their children and their country. There was a time, like the *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat* periods, when people could look after themselves and protect their interests and country. No outsiders could then make inroads into India with any success. We find that Alexander the great, started his conquests from Greece and marched right up to India, but could not dare to go beyond the Beas, though he had only one serious engagement with Porus in India. But after the introduction of Jainism and Buddhism, with their teachings of non-violence and renunciation, the conditions changed entirely. No foreign invasion could then be stemmed. Consequently, India has remained subjugated and enslaved for almost one thousand years. It is astonishing to observe that an alien invader when conquered the country and settled down here, could not stand against the attack of the next invader to come. People had become so selfish, unsympathetic and mean that the whole subcontinent consisted of small principalities. When Alexander attacked, instead of joining hands with Porus to defend the land, the rulers of Taxila and Avisara straight away surrendered to the invader. Greater part of the subcontinent was then ruled by the Nanda King, but he did not feel concerned about what was happening on the western borders. When Mohammed Ghauri attacked Prithvi Raj of Delhi, Jai Chand of Kanoj celebrated Delhi's defeat, never thinking that he would be the next in line. This policy

to pick up one by one the scattered rulers has been followed very fruitfully both by the Mohammadan conquerors and the British.

On close observation, we find that great havoc has been wrought by moral degradation in India. Our people had been sinking to the lowest level to obtain their personal desires. From the very beginning, we have been following the policy of appeasement. To gain the goodwill and patronage of the Mughal rulers, not only did the Hindu *Rajas* offer their sisters and daughters to Mughal kings in wedding, but also felt pride in siding with them to get their own brothers butchered and destroyed when the Mughal Emperor decide to have his meals after collecting a *maund* and quarter of the 'holy threads' from the Hindus. It is mentioned in our history that even well-known nobles staked their kingdoms, their wives, and their belongings in gamble. Yudhistra, known as the virtuous, lost his kingdom, wife, and honour in a gamble with Duryodhan. They did not feel any shame in disrobing women, like Draupadi, in open court. Kidnapping and eloping was a rule of law even in the highest society. Rukmani's case is a historic instance. Prithvi Raj also carried away at night Sanjogita, daughter of Jai Chand. This led to their enmity which cleared the way for Mohammad Ghauri's conquest. Later on, if one king sided with the East India Company, the other sided with the French. We also need to keep this in mind that when at Anandpur Sahib the tenth Satguru accelerated the preparation to face and fight against tyranny and bigoted fanaticism of the Mughal ruler of Delhi, it were the Hindu Hill *Rajas* who first opposed the Guru.

## WHEN GURU NANAK CAME

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The 15th and 16th centuries have a very important place in human history. It was a period of change, awakening, enlightenment, resurrection and revolt. The people had become fed up with the high-handedness of the priest class and their hollow rituals, materialistic outlook, meaningless ceremonies and spiritless worship. Great atrocities were committed in the name of religion. Ego is of several kinds. But the ego of religion is the most dangerous and develops even into human barbarities. This sets one religion against another and creates bad blood between man and man. The weak have to suffer at the hands of the strong. History tells us that early Christians in Europe had to suffer terrible tortures. They were herded together in an arena to face hungry lions. When the beasts tore them apart and began to eat them, the persecutor tyrants enjoyed the scene and acclaimed the play. Sometimes these Christian victims were tied to poles and lighted as torches in the Roman assemblies and banquets. Thus, the Romans satiated their religious egos. Similar and much more horrible and inhuman atrocities were committed in India in the name of religion. The shameful treatment meted out to the Sudras (today called scheduled castes) by higher castes were in no way less barbaric. This was also done in the name of religion. In the same way the atrocities, tyrannies and humiliating degradations inflicted on Hindus by bigoted Muslim rulers were also in the name of religion and to satisfy their egos. The person inflicting, by this arrogance of religious ego, these atrocities considered that he was performing a very noble and sacred function which would earn him a direct entry

to heaven. But in reality he climbed down to beastly animal level. It can only be an inhuman beast who can order a living human being to be placed in a boiling kettle, have red hot sand poured on another's head, flay people alive, remove their skulls and hack them limb by limb. Not only this, it is only such a beast of a man who can massacre small children and put them in their mothers' laps. Sikh history is an unending tale of such sufferings and sacrifices.

At that time, in the subcontinent, the Brahmin and the *Qazi* reigned supreme. The Brahmins had manoeuvred in such a way that the brainy and intellectual part of the masses was locked away in their self-seeking custody. The reading of scriptures and other books of knowledge and teaching to select pupils was their main function in life. No other caste could interfere in this matter. If a low caste person happened to listen to the *Ved Mantra*, red hot molten lead was poured into his ears. All others functioned as instruments only of the Brahmin priest. Even of the ruler, he was the undisputed adviser. Amongst the Muslims, even this camouflage was lifted. It was straight the *Qazi* himself who held court and tried cases and pronounced judgements.

The priest class amongst the Hindus and Mohammedans as well as Christians monopolized in their own way their different gates to heaven and salvation, where their followers could buy the admission tickets.

It was in this context that people revolted against the priest class. This change came about almost in every country in the world; in India, Asia, and also Europe, i.e., in Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. We find that in Europe great thinkers appeared in these two centuries, like Martin Luther (1483-1546) in Germany, Calvin (1509-1564) in France, Zwingli (1484-1531) in Switzerland, Hugh Latimer (1490-1555), Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) in England, John Fisher (1459-1535), and Tindal (1656-1733) and Coverdale (1514-1568), who were modifiers of the testament. Consequently, those who protested against the Roman Catholic priests came to be known as Protestants. Amongst Muslims the movement of Sufism started.

In India, Bhagti Marg took its birth as a rebellion against

Brahmin priesthood. This was spearheaded by Rama Nand, Kabir, Nam Dev, Ek Nath, Jai Dev, Chaitanya, Valabh Acharya, Ravi Dass, Pipa, Sadhna, Beni, Trilochan, etc. This rebellion or awakening was in protest against formalism, ritualism and ceremonies shorn of spirit reality. This movement was a tirade against superstition and blind faith. All the old stale ideas, philosophies and formalities were trashed and recast. All this effort, this change and evolution was like churning curd, which brought forth the butter, in the shape of Sikhism.

Guru Nanak was born in 1469. The conditions in India which prevailed at that time can be known from Guru Nanak Dev's own words. In *Rag Asa*, he says :

No one feels compassion on simply seeing a person.

ਦਰਸਨਿ ਦੇਖਿਐ ਦਇਆ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

For, without "lubrication" no one will move.

ਲਏ ਦਿਤੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਰਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

The ruler administers justice when his palm is greased.

ਰਾਜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇ ਹਥਿ ਹੋਇ ॥

No one is moved in the name of God.

ਕਹੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

Nanak says : They have human forms and bear ostentatious names.

ਮਾਣਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

But their deeds are of dogs who wait at the door for food and orders.

ਕਰਣੀ ਕੁਤਾ ਦਰਿ ਫੁਰਮਾਨੁ ॥

This depicts the conditions of corruption and injustice prevailing at that time amongst the people as well as the rulers. This description would perhaps be even more appropriate for the conditions prevailing at the present moment.

As regards the political degradation, the Satguru says in *Asa di Var* :

Sin is the King, Greed the Minister, Falsehood the Mint-master.

ਲਬੁ ਪਾਪੁ ਦੁਇ ਰਾਜਾ ਮਹਤਾ ਕੁੜੁ ਹੋਆ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੁ ॥

And lust the Deputy to take counsel with, they sit and



confer together.

ਕਾਮੁ ਨੇਬੁ ਸਦਿ ਪੁਛੀਐ ਬਹਿ ਬਹਿ ਕਰੇ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

About the subject people also, the Satguru has reprimanded, remonstrated the ignorant and disrespectful for foolish submission as such :

The blind subjects, out of ignorance, pay homage like dead men.

ਅੰਧੀ ਰਯਤਿ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਹੂਣੀ ਭਾਹਿ ਭਰੇ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ॥

The Satguru has also referred to the Hindu mentality of slavishness in the following words in *Asa di Var* :

They tie a loin cloth (ਧੋਤੀ), a sacrificial mark (ਟਿੱਕਾ), and rosary, yet live on those whom they call *Malechhas*.

ਧੋਤੀ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੇ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਧਾਨੁ ਮਲੇਛਾ ਖਾਈ ॥

They perform Hindu worship in private, yet they read the scriptures of Mohammedans and mimic their manners :

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਤੁਰਕਾ ਭਾਈ ॥

The conditions then prevailing are very vividly and comprehensively mentioned in the following *Salokas* of *Asa di Var* :

Those who devour men, read the *Nimaz*.

ਮਾਣਸ ਖਾਣੇ ਕਰਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥

Those who ply the dagger have sacred thread on their necks.

ਛੁਰੀ ਵਗਾਇਨਿ ਤਿਨ ਗਲਿ ਤਾਗ ॥

In such people's houses, the Brahmins blow their Conches :

ਤਿਨ ਘਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਪੂਰਹਿ ਨਾਦ ॥

And they relish the same food.

ਉਨਾ ਭਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਓਈ ਸਾਦ ॥

They trade in lies with the capital of falsehood.

ਕੂੜੀ ਰਾਸਿ ਕੂੜਾ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ॥

And earn their livelihood by speaking lies.

ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਆਹਾਰੁ ॥

Decency and faith are remote from them.

ਸਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕਾ ਡੇਰਾ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

For, Nanak, falsehood prevails everywhere.

ਨਾਨਕ ਕੂੜ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ॥

With all their sacred marks on the forehead and their  
loin-cloths tucked in behind,

ਮਥੈ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੇੜਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਕਖਾਈ ॥

They are butchers of the world, with knives in their hands.

ਹਥਿ ਛੁਰੀ ਜਗਤ ਕਾਸਾਈ ॥

- To be acceptable to the ruling class, they wear blue  
clothes.

ਨੀਲ ਵਸਤ੍ਰ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਨੁ ॥

They earn their living from those whom they call  
*Malechhas*; yet they worship *Puranas*.

ਮਲੇਛ ਧਾਨੁ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਪੁਰਾਨੁ ॥

They eat meat of a goat killed in the Mohammedan  
fashion with the unutterable words pronounced on it.

ਅਭਾਖਿਆ ਕਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਬਕਰਾ ਖਾਣਾ ॥

Yet, they allow no access to their cooking squares.

ਚਉਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ॥

Having smeared a place for cooking purposes, they draw  
a line around it;

ਦੇ ਕੈ ਚਉਕਾ ਕਢੀ ਕਾਰ ॥

And sitting within, false as they are,

ਉਪਰਿ ਆਇ ਬੈਠੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ॥

They say : Touch not ! Do not touch it !

ਮਤੁ ਭਿਟੈ ਵੇ ਮਤੁ ਭਿਟੈ ॥

For, this food of ours will be polluted.

ਇਹੁ ਅੰਨੁ ਅਸਾਡਾ ਫਿਟੈ ॥

But their bodies are already defiled with their foul deeds,

ਤਨਿ ਫਿਟੈ ਫੇੜ ਕਰੇਨਿ ॥

And their hearts are false even while they rinse their  
mouths.

ਮਨਿ ਜੂਠੈ ਚੁਲੀ ਭਰੇਨਿ ॥

Says Nanak, we should worship the Truth;

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਈਐ ॥

If we are pure, we shall obtain it.

ਸੁਚਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਤਾ ਸਚੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

Thus, the Satguru has pointed out the weaknesses in both the rulers and ruled, Mohammedans and Hindus, and misguided people of every school of thought, irrespective of any class, creed or personality.

As a contemporary and an eye-witness, the Satguru has given a very moving and graphic account of the bloody happenings during Babar's invasion of India. He says in *Rag Asa* :

They who wore beautiful tresses and the partings of whose hair were dyed with vermillion.

ਜਿਨ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਟੀਆ ਮਾਂਗੀ ਪਾਇ ਸੰਧੂਰੁ ॥

Have their locks now shorn with scissors, and dust is thrown upon their heads.

ਸੇ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਤੀ ਮੁੰਨੀਅਨਿ, ਗਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਵੈ ਧੂੜਿ ॥

They dwelt in their palaces; now they cannot find a seat in public.

ਮਹਲਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਹੋਦੀਆ ਹੁਣਿ ਬਹਣਿ ਨ ਮਿਲਨਿ ਹਦੁਰਿ ॥੧॥

Hail, Father ! Hail !

ਆਦੇਸੁ ਬਾਬਾ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥

O Primal Being, Thy limit is not known; Thou makest and beholdest the different phases of existence.

ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖਹਿ ਵੇਸ ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

When they were married, they appeared beautiful near their spouses;

ਜਦਹੁ ਸੀਆ ਵੀਆਹੀਆ ਲਾੜੇ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ ॥

They came in their sedans adorned with ivory;

ਹੀਡੋਲੀ ਚੜਿ ਆਈਆ ਦੰਦ ਖੰਡ ਕੀਤੇ ਰਾਸਿ ॥

Water was waved round their heads, and glittering fans over them.

ਉਪਰਹੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਾਰੀਐ ਝਲੇ ਝਿਮਕਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ ॥੨॥

They had hundreds of thousands waiting on them sitting, and hundreds of thousands waiting on them standing.

ਇਕੁ ਲਖੁ ਲਹਨਿ ਬਹਿਨੀਆ ਲਖੁ ਲਹਨਿ ਖੜੀਆ ॥

Eating coconuts and dates they sported on their couches;

ਗਰੀ ਛੁਹਾਰੇ ਖਾਂਦੀਆ ਮਾਣਨਿ ਸੇਜੜੀਆ ॥

But now chains are on their necks, and broken are their strings of pearls.

ਤਿਨ ਗਲਿ ਸਿਲਕਾ ਪਾਈਆ ਤੁਟਨਿ ਮੋਤਸਰੀਆ ॥੩॥

Wealth and beauty which afforded them pleasure, have now become their enemy.

ਧਨੁ ਜੋਬਨੁ ਦੁਇ ਵੈਰੀ ਹੋਏ ਜਿਨ੍ਹੀ ਰਖੇ ਰੰਗੁ ਲਾਇ ॥

The order was given to the soldiers to take and dishonour them.

ਦੂਤਾ ਨੋ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਲੈ ਚਲੇ ਪਤਿ ਗਵਾਇ ॥

If it pleases Him, He giveth honour; and if it pleases Him, He giveth punishment.

ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਦੇ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜੇ ਭਾਵੈ ਦੇਇ ਸਜਾਇ ॥੪॥

If they had thought of Him before, why should they have received punishment ?

ਅਗੋ ਦੇ ਜੇ ਚੇਤੀਐ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਇਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥

But they had lost all thought of God in joys, in spectacles, and in pleasures.

ਸਾਹਾਂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਗਵਾਈਆ ਰੰਗਿ ਤਮਾਸੈ ਚਾਇ ॥

When Babar's rule was proclaimed no prince ate his food.

ਬਾਬਰ ਵਾਣੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਗਈ ਕੁਇਰੁ ਨ ਰੋਟੀ ਖਾਇ ॥੫॥

Some lost their five times of prayer, others their hours of worship.

ਇਕਨਾ ਵਖਤ ਖੁਆਈਅਹਿ ਇਕਨਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਜਾਇ ॥

How shall Hindu women now bathe and apply frontal marks without their sacred squares ?

ਚਉਕੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਹਿੰਦਵਾਣੀਆ ਕਿਉ ਟਿਕੇ ਕਢਹਿ ਨਾਇ ॥

They who never thought of Ram are not now allowed even to mention Khuda.

ਰਾਮੁ ਨ ਕਬਹੂ ਚੇਤਿਓ ਹੁਣਿ ਕਹਣਿ ਨ ਮਿਲੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥੬॥

Some return to their homes; others go around and enquire about the safety of their dear ones.

ਇਕਿ ਘਰਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਇਕਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਪੁਛਹਿ ਸੁਖ ॥

But some are destined to sit and weep in pain.

ਇਕਨਾ ਏਹੋ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਬਹਿ ਬਹਿ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਦੁਖ ॥

What pleaseth God, O Nanak, shall happen; What is man ?

ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਥੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਨੁਖ ॥੭॥੧੧॥

Where are those sports, those stables, and those horses ?

Where those bugles and clarions ?

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਖੇਲ ਤਬੇਲਾ ਘੋੜੇ ਕਹਾ ਭੇਰੀ ਸਹਨਾਈ ॥

Where are those who buckled on their swords and were mighty in battle ? Where those scarlet uniforms ?

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਤੇਗਬੰਦ ਗਾਡੇਰੜਿ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਲਾਲ ਕਵਾਈ ॥

Where those mirrors and fair faces ? They are not to be seen here.

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਆਰਸੀਆ ਮੁਹ ਬੰਕੇ ਐਥੈ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਨਾਹੀ ॥੧॥

This world is Thine, O Lord of the earth.

ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਤੂੰ ਗੋਸਾਈ ॥

In one moment Thou establishest and disestablishest; Thou distributest wealth as Thou pleasest.

ਏਕ ਘੜੀ ਮਹਿ ਥਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪੇ ਜਰੁ ਵੰਡਿ ਦੇਵੈ ਭਾਂਈ ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

Where are those houses, those mansions, and those palaces ? Where those beautiful seraglios ?

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਘਰ ਦਰ ਮੰਡਪ ਮਹਲਾ ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਬੰਕ ਸਰਾਈ ॥

Where are those easy couches and those women, a sight of whom banished sleep ?

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਸੇਜ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਵੇਖਿ ਨੀਦ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥

Where is that betel, those betel-sellers, and those fair ones ? They have disappeared.

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਪਾਨ ਤੰਬੋਲੀ ਹਰਮਾ ਹੋਈਆ ਛਾਈ ਮਾਈ ॥੨॥

For wealth many are ruined; this wealth hath disgraced many.

ਇਸੁ ਜਰ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਘਣੀ ਵਿਗੁਤੀ ਇਨਿ ਜਰ ਘਣੀ ਖੁਆਈ ॥

It is not amassed without sin, and it accompanies not the dead.

ਪਾਪਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

Him whom the Creator destroyeth, He first depriveth him of virtue.

ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਿ ਖੁਆਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਖੁਸਿ ਲਏ ਚੰਗਿਆਈ ॥੩॥

Millions of priests tried by their miraculous power to restrain the Emperor when they heard of his approach.

ਕੋਟੀ ਹੂ ਪੀਰ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਏ ਜਾ ਮੀਰੁ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਧਾਇਆ ॥

He burned houses, mansions, and palaces; he cut princes to pieces, and had them rolled in dust.

ਥਾਨ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਜਲੇ ਬਿਜ ਮੰਦਰ ਮੁਛਿ ਮੁਛਿ ਕੁਇਰ ਹੁਲਾਇਆ ॥

No Mughal hath become blind no priest hath wrought a miracle.

ਕੋਈ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਨਾ ਹੋਆ ਅੰਧਾ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਰਚਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥੪॥

There was a contest between the Mughals and Pathans; the sword was wielded in the battle.

ਮੁਗਲ ਪਠਾਣਾ ਭਈ ਲੜਾਈ ਰਣ ਮਹਿ ਤੇਗ ਵਗਾਈ ॥

One side aimed and discharged their guns, the others advanced their doped elephants.

ਓਨੀ ਤੁਪਕ ਤਾਣਿ ਚਲਾਈ ਓਨੀ ਹਸਤਿ ਚਿੜਾਈ ॥

They whose letter hath been torn in God's court must die, my brethren.

ਜਿਨ ਕੀ ਚੀਰੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਟੀ ਤਿਨਾ ਮਰਣਾ ਭਾਈ ॥੫॥

There are the wives of Hindus, of Turks, of Bhattis, and of Rajputs.

ਇਕ ਹਿੰਦਵਾਣੀ ਅਵਰ ਤੁਰਕਾਣੀ ਭਟਿਆਣੀ ਠਕੁਰਾਣੀ ॥

The robes of some were torn from head to foot; the dwellings of others became their places of cremation.

ਇਕਨਾ ਪੇਰਣ ਸਿਰ ਖੁਰ ਪਾਟੇ ਇਕਨਾ ਵਾਸੁ ਮਸਾਣੀ ॥

How could they whose beloveds came not home pass the night ?

ਜਿਨਕੇ ਬੰਕੇ ਘਰੀ ਨ ਆਇਆ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਰੈਣਿ ਵਿਹਾਣੀ ॥੬॥

The Creator acteth and causeth others to act; to whom shall we complain ?

ਆਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਿਸਨੋ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਈਐ ॥

Misery and happiness are according to Thy pleasure; to whom shall we go and bewail.

ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਤੇਰੈ ਭਾਣੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਕਿਸਥੈ ਜਾਇ ਰੂਆਈਐ ॥

The Commander is pleased in issuing His orders; Nanak, man obtaineth what is allotted to him.

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਚਲਾਏ ਵਿਗਸੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਪਾਈਐ ॥੭॥੧੨॥

Guru Nanak Dev so deeply felt the pain that he made a moving appeal to his Creator and even remonstrated with Him at the great suffering the people were put to. His mention about it is reproduced here :

Babar ruled over Khurasan and hath terrified Hindustan.

ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਡਰਾਇਆ ॥

The Creator takes no blame to Himself; it was Death disguised as a Mughal that was let loose.

ਆਪੈ ਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਚੜਾਇਆ ॥

When there was so much slaughter and lamentation, and groaning, didst not Thou, O God, feel compassion ?

ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈਂ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥

Creator, Thou belongest to all.

ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ ॥

If a tyrant slays a tyrant, one is not angry;

ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

But if a ravening lion fell on a herd, its master should show his manliness.

ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੈ ਵਗੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ ॥

The dogs (Lodhis of Delhi) have thrown away the priceless inheritance; when they are dead, no one will remember them with regard.

ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾੜਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ ॥

O God, Thou Thyself joinest and Thou Thyself separatest — lo ! This is Thy greatness.

ਆਪੇ ਜੋੜਿ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਆਪੇ ਵੇਖੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥੨॥

If any one gives himself a great name and enjoys himself to his heart's content.

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਨਾਉ ਧਰਾਏ ਵਡਾ ਸਾਦ ਕਰੇ ਮਨ ਭਾਣੇ ॥

In the Master's view, he is as a worm which nibbleth corn;

ਖਸਮੈ ਨਦਰੀ ਕੀੜਾ ਆਵੈ ਜੇਤੇ ਚੁਗੈ ਦਾਣੇ ॥

But he who while alive is dead, may gain something, O Nanak, by repeating the Name.

ਮਰਿ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ ॥੩॥੫॥੩੯॥

Then again in *Rag Tilang*, the Satguru movingly describes :

As the word of the Master comes to me, so do I make it known, O Lalo.

ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥

Bringing a wedding party of sin Babar has descended from Kabul and demands by force "wealth and country"

as bride.

ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਝ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥

Qazis and Brahmins are swept aside, the devil presides over marriage service.

ਕਾਜੀਆ ਬਾਮਣਾ ਕੀ ਗਲ ਥਕੀ ਅਗਦੁ ਪੜੈ ਸੈਤਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥

Muslim women read the Quran, and in suffering call upon God.

ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੀਆ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਕਸਟ ਮਹਿਕਰਹਿ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥

Hindu women of high or low castes all meet the same fate.

ਜਾਤਿ ਸਨਾਤੀ ਹੋਰਿ ਹਿੰਦਵਾਣੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਭੀ ਲੇਖੈ ਲਾਇ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥

They sing the paeans of murder, O Nanak, and smear themselves with saffron of blood.

ਖੂਨ ਕੇ ਸੋਹਿਲੇ ਗਾਵੀਅਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਤੁ ਕਾ ਕੁੰਗੂ ਪਾਇ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥

Nanak sings the praises of the Master in this city of corpses, and expresses his thoughts.

ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੇ ਗੁਣ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਮਾਸਪੁਰੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਖੁ ਮਸੋਲਾ ॥

He Who created all and assigned them different positions, looks on them sitting alone unattached.

ਜਿਨਿ ਉਪਾਈ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਵਾਈ ਬੈਠਾ ਵੇਖੈ ਵਖਿ ਇਕੋਲਾ ॥

True is the Master, true His decision, and true also His command.

ਸਚਾ ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਚੁ ਤਪਾਵਸੁ ਸਚੜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇਗੁ ਮਸੋਲਾ ॥

When bodies shall be cut like shreds of cloth; Hindustan will remember what I say.

ਕਾਇਆ ਕਪੜੁ ਟੁਕੁ ਟੁਕੁ ਹੋਸੀ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਸਮਾਲਸੀ ਬੋਲਾ ॥

Coming in '78 (*Samvat* 1578) departing in '97 (Mughal Humayun left - A.D. 1540 *Samvat* 1597) and then shall arise another disciple of a hero (Sher Shah Suri took over). ਆਵਨਿ ਅਠਤਰੈ ਜਾਨਿ ਸਤਾਨਵੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਭੀ ਉਠਸੀ ਮਰਦ ਕਾ ਚੋਲਾ ॥

Nanak utters the Word of the True One, for now is the time to proclaim the Truth.

ਸਚ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਆਖੈ ਸਚੁ ਸੁਣਾਇਸੀ ਸਚ ਕੀ ਬੋਲਾ ॥੨॥੩॥੫॥



## GURU NANAK'S WAY OF LIFE

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The path Guru Nanak chalked and laid out for us is called Sikhism. He not only shows the way but actually takes us by the hand and teaches us to tread it. It took the Satguru two hundred years to make us proficient and self-confident enough to proceed on this path, face and conquer obstacles, and reach the goal. This way of life, i.e., Sikhism, is not based on any set of *mantras*, rituals, formalism or talisman, postures of worship, *yogik aasans*, fasts or penances, signs or symbols, ablutions or trances. In *Rag Suhi*, Guru Nanak says :

I do not believe in *tantra* and *mantra* or other hypocrisy.

Immanent God has set my mind at rest.

ਤੰਤੂ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਪਾਖੰਡੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥ (ਸੁਹੀ ਮ: ੧)

The tenth Satguru, in *Bachittar Natak*, says :

By writing *jantras* one may get tired and get exhausted  
by reciting *mantras*,

ਲਿਖੰ ਜੰਤ੍ਰ ਥਾਕੇ ਪੜੈ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਹਾਰੇ ।

In the end time shall have its toll.

ਕਰੇ ਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਅੰਤ ਲੈ ਕੈ ਬਿਚਾਰੇ ।

Some exhaust their lives in perfecting *tantras*.

ਕਿਤਿਓ ਤੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਸਾਧੇ ਜੁ ਜਨਮੁ ਬਿਤਾਇਓ ।

It is all useless, not a single one is of avail.

ਭਏ ਫੋਕਟੁ ਕਾਜ ਏਕੈ ਨ ਆਇਓ ।

One may do anything and may seek refuge in million  
ways,

ਕਰੇ ਕੋਟ ਕੋਊ ਧਰੇ ਕੋਟ ਓਟੁ ।

No one will be saved; time shall strike.

ਬਚੈਗੋ ਨ ਕਿਉਹੂੰ ਕਰੈ ਕਾਲ ਚੋਟੈ ।

Let endless *jantars* be written and crores of *mantras* be recited.

ਲਿਖੰ ਜੰਤ੍ਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਪੜੈ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਕੋਟੈ ।

There is no other refuge except His protection

ਬਿਨਾ ਸਰਨਿ ਤਾਕੀ ਨਹੀ ਔਰ ਓਟੈ ।

There is no place in Sikhism for any *Karm Kand*, pilgrimages, austerities, giving up family life or renunciation of the world. Guru Nanak, in *Var Sarang*, says :

God is not pleased by wandering at the holy places and remaining naked.

ਨ ਭੀਜੈ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਭਵਿਐ ਨੀਗਿ ॥

Nor by doling out alms.

ਨ ਭੀਜੈ ਦਾਤੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਪੁੰਨਿ ॥

The ninth Satguru, in Bilawal, says :

Of what avail are fasts and pilgrimages if the protection of the Lord is not sought.

ਕਹਾ ਭਇਓ ਤੀਰਥ ਥੁੜ ਕੀਏ ਰਾਮ ਸਰਨਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ॥

Yogic practices and *yagyas* are useless if God's praise is forgotten.

ਜੋਗ ਜਗ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਤਿਹ ਮਾਨਉ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜਸੁ ਬਿਸਰਾਵੈ ॥

Mere reading of scriptures or mechanical repetition of prayers, attainment of supernatural powers or physical exercises, and show of miracles or magic, have no place in Sikhism. Sikhism is not based on dogmas or a set of commandments. Recitation of hymns and numbering of prayers with rosaries, etc., alms and charities, giving up of food and going naked do not help solve the basic problem. Any amount of hard thinking or trying not to think, possession of worldly goods, science or technology or any system of hollow philosophies or institutionalized religion, regimented society, attempts at mental discipline or esoteric introversion, planning or compulsion, social and moral laws, or any kind of imposition, can not quench the basic human thirst. All these things only fan and inflate the ego and do not show the right path. In the very beginning of the Holy Granth, Guru Nanak Dev, in *Japu* says :

Thinking avails not how-so-hard one thinks.

ਸੋਚੈ ਸੋਚਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਸੋਚੀ ਲਖ ਵਾਰ ॥

Nor silence avails, howsoever much one shrinks into oneself.

ਚੁਪੈ ਚੁਪ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਲਾਇ ਰਹਾ ਲਿਵ ਤਾਰ ॥

Nor hunger goes with the pleasure loads of the world.

ਭੁਖਿਆ ਭੁਖ ਨ ਉਤਰੀ ਜੇ ਬੰਨਾ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਭਾਰ ॥

Of a myriad clevernesses, not one works.

ਸਹਸ ਸਿਆਣਪਾ ਲਖ ਹੋਹਿ ਤ ਇਕ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਨਾਲਿ ॥

In the next line, the Satguru poses the question :

Then, how shall we attain the truth ? And how the veil of falsehood be rend ?

ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ ॥

The answer is provided in the next line :

Nanak, by cheerfully following His Will which is inborn in us and ingrained.

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੧॥

Sikhism does not aim at salvation or deliverance which means a static merger with and reabsorption of the individual soul into the Universal Soul, and get finished with it. This will amount almost to suicide. This is left entirely to the Grace of Akal Purkh (ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ). Our duty is confined to right thinking and right actions with pulsating love of the Omnipresent. The fifth Satguru, in *Dev Gandhari*, says :

I seek no dominion nor deliverance either :

ਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ

For, I crave for nothing but the love of Thy Lotus Feet.

ਮਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲਾਰੇ ॥

Sikhism is based purely on rational understanding, intellectual argument, realisation of the Truth, and enlightenment through knowledge (*gyan*) and interpretation of the Word in actual life. Deeds and not the creed are essential. In the words of the fifth Guru in *Gauri Sukhmani*, it is based only on :

Meditate on the Lord's Name and do what is clean.

ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮੁ ॥

The Satguru's path is the shortest, straightest, and also the

clearest. The ascent may be tough as a short cut is bound to be, but the path is wide and well defined. It aims at forging of the individual character of man and formation of a society of men of God. It provides a straight approach by laying down the basic principle of attuning one's mind to the Will of the Supreme Being (ਹੁਕਮ) and extinction of selfishness (ਹਉਮੈ) by establishing harmony with Truth.

Guru Nanak's way of life, in short, is a guidance to us for living this human span of life successfully, effectively, actively, purposefully, fruitfully, usefully, forcefully and in accordance and in tune with the Will of the Creator, Who ordained us to live this life, and to live in such a way that we may earn His pleasure and blessing. To do so, it is only the right attitude of mind that counts. We have to try and control the mind and forge it into an attitude where it accepts without hesitation the Will and the Commands of the Master. Guru Nanak, in *Japu* says :

If the mind is subdued the world is conquered.

ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ ॥

We have, therefore, to mould our mind to be attuned with the Divine Will and remain in complete harmony with it.

Sikhism is not a passive concept, but is an active pursuit. The Khalsa did not run after peace of mind alone but acquired power so that it may be employed to guarantee peace to those who were victims of political oppression and religious bigotry.

The Satguru's Way, therefore, is of harmony and action (*simran* and *sewa*). We have to be in complete harmony with the Will of the Providence both implicit (*Raza*) as well as explicit (*Hukam*). The Creator lives and functions in His creation, so we have to remain in perfect harmony with the working of nature. Harmony has to be created within ourselves, our surroundings, our fellow beings, and ultimately in the whole creation to attain to the top of development and provide the human mind with eternal peace and blessings.

To attain harmony with the Divine Will, complete surrender of the self is necessary. On arriving at this stage one finds oneself to be at a crossroads. One leads to abject surrender, renunciation, fatalism, pessimism, and inaction. This is the negative way, which

in *Sikhi* terms is called *Dhaindi kala*, where all enjoyment, happiness and pleasure in living is lost. It was this passive way that had landed the country in the lap of degradation and slavery. Satguru shows us the other way which is of positive action, enjoyment in life, and pleasure in everything He does. Disappointment and frustration are turned into hope and joyful optimism. This is called *Charhadi kala* (optimistic high spirits). Harmony with His Will would lead us to pleasure in positive action in tune with the Will. Inaction means lifelessness. Any discordant note struck has to be shut and obstacles in the way have to be cleared.

A positive example in this respect was set by the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun Dev. In the burning month of *Jeth*, 1606 A.D., when the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun Dev was being done to death at Lahore under the provisions of the ancient Mughal rule of *Yasa* which had laid down that if blood of a man of God was spilt, it brings down untold calamities. To avoid that spilling of blood, burning hot sand was poured on him and he was placed on a red hot iron sheet. On seeing this horrible spectacle, Saint Mian Meer got furious and offered to interfere and bring his miraculous powers into action. But the Satguru asked him to be calm and watch rapturously the Will of the Almighty Providence in action; if it were not the Divine Will such a happening could not come about. To interfere with the Master's Will will mean striking a discordant note and disturbing harmony.

## THE AIM

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The aim of Satguru's mission was to turn humanity towards God which would extirpate evil and install virtue both on moral and political planes, and would create a society and organisation, which could itself continue the work. Sikhism, therefore, aims at generating a race of men of God, who have complete faith and anchor in Him and are enthusiastically out to do good and to serve mankind (ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਉਮਾਹਾ) and, thus, spiritualise life on earth and lift mankind to a higher plane. It is only a God-conscious man who is animated with an intense desire to do good in this world.

The ideal was set in the first *shlok* of Guru Nanak in *Asa di Var* :

I am a sacrifice to my Guru a myriad times a day :

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਿਉਹਾੜੀ ਸਦ ਵਾਰ ॥

Who has turned men into gods and that too without delay.

ਜਿਨਿ ਮਾਣਸ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਤ ਨ ਲਾਗੀ ਵਾਰ ॥

These 'gods' are to do service to humanity and be ever ready to offer sacrifice for an approved cause and to uphold godly virtues and human values as well as to exact justice where it is denied. According to the tenth Guru, the purpose was :

To uphold and advance righteousness, and to emancipate the good, "the saint in us",

ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਬਾਰਨ ।

To extirpate evil and evil-doers, root and branch.

ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੇ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ ।

This mission started by the first Guru as a movement, calculatively and meticulously worked, progressed, and developed

towards this goal. We find that during the time of the fourth Nanak, Guru Ram Das, the development of the Sikhs towards this ideal had reached this stage and the movement touched the point that the Satguru wished for and said :

O God, grant the dust of the feet of the Sikhs of the Guru so that we sinners may also be saved.

ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ ਕੀ ਹਰਿ ਧੂੜਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਹਮ ਪਾਪੀ ਭੀ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਹਿ ॥

Then again in *Rag Gauri*, the fourth Satguru says :

Nanak craves the dust of that Sikh of the Guru, who always remembers and makes others remember *Naam*.

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਧੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥

The movement reached its finality in 1699 A.D. when, after 200 years of hard work, these 'gods' appeared in the shape of the Khalsa. These gods created by the Satguru, were not like those legendary *puranic* gods who could not withstand the onslaught of the demons and could not protect themselves, but fled crying and bewailing to goddess Durga to seek her help and refuge. The gods created in the shape of the Khalsa, not only were able to defend their own hearths, homes and families, but also came to the help of the helpless millions who were groaning in their imbecility under the iron heels of the tyrannous and barbarous foreign invaders. To quote an instance, they rescued 25-30 thousand Hindu women and girls, who were being carried away as war booty to Afganistan by Ahmed Shah Abdali, and escorted them safely back to their respective homes. These gods, under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Baghel Singh Karorasinghia, 30 thousand strong, were eventually able to ride triumphantly into Delhi in 1790.

Thus, we find that the Satguru's *Panth* has provided the living organism, guided by a channel of rationalism, not edicts, with instructions to grow and prosper and perpetually evolve (thus being ever new and fresh) guided by common sense and *Shabd*, the Omnipresence of the Guru. Thus it took 200 years to build the nucleus of society, capable of propagating itself without waiting for any prophets and *avtars* to show up.

## THE APPROACH

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Every school of thought, every great religion, has, in fact, the same goal in view, which is to provide the human mind with tranquillity, stability, calm, and bliss. They are all, in a way, together at the bottom and meet again at the top. It is in between that differences and troubles lie. Political considerations and ambitions, social systems and rituals, selfish interests and rivalries, tend to separate them and create schisms and classes. Sikhism asserts that all true religions are not, in fact, opposed to each other. They are all one, if they come to accept compassion as the fountain-head of virtues and consider spiritual elevation, the forging of individual character, and the formation of a society of men-of-God, as their aim. The tenth Satguru, in *Akal Ustat*, says :

The Creator (Hindu *Karta*), the Beneficent (Muslim *Karim*), are the same. The Provider and the Merciful are the same;

ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੀਮ ਸੋਈ ਰਾਜਕ ਰਹੀਮ ਓਈ ।

Let no one even by mistake suppose there is any difference.

ਦੂਸਰੇ ਨ ਭੇਦਿ ਕੋਈ ਭੂਲ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਮਾਨਬੋ ।

Worship the One God, who is the One Divine Guru for all.

ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਿ ਸਭਹੀ ਕੋ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਏਕ ।

Know that His Form is One, and that He is the One Light diffused in all.

ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਜੋਤ ਜਾਨਬੋ ।

The temple and the mosque are the same; the Hindu



worship and the Mussalman prayer are the same.

ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਐ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਐ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਓਈ ।

All men are the same, it is through error they appear different.

ਮਾਨਸ ਸਬੈ ਏਕ ਹੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੋ ਕ੍ਰਮਾਉ ਹੈ ।

Originally, all the religions come into being to provide the human mind with peace and eternal bliss. They have different approaches, but are all seeking to reach the top. Some of them are circuitous and tough and some are short and straight. Some are difficult, while some are easy to tread. Some of them are full of obstacles and labyrinths, while some pass through wilderness and jungles full of ferocious and poisonous predators. Through some, people are able somehow to pass, while in others they get lost.

Sikhism has its own approach. It steers clear of formalism, ritualism, religious hypocrisy, spiritual stunts, acrobatics, austerities, and other physical sufferings. It is a lesson in life; how to live it purposefully and successfully so that it may be 'approved' here and in the hereafter. Sikhism enjoins upon us to fulfil our duty both towards the Creator and His creation where He has been pleased to send us. This life has to be lived joyfully and cheerfully and not bewailing and repenting. Duty is confined to effort; diligent, hearty, hard and consistent effort. The result, the fruit, lies in the hands of the Omnipotent Bestower. Whatever the Bestower in His pleasure bestows, is to be accepted without grumbling. The fifth Satguru, in *Rag Todi*, says :

Whatever Thou bestoweth satiates; I wander not elsewhere.

ਜੇ ਤੂ ਦੇਹਿ ਤਹੀ ਇਹੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤੈ ਆਨ ਨ ਕਤਹੁ ਧਾਵਉ ॥

We have to earn the pleasure and blessing of the Master. Our work, our efforts and our actions should be such as not only to create love for the Master in us like other *sufi* and *Bhagti Marg* people, but also the aim is that the Master may begin to like and love us. In *Jap*, Guru Nanak says :

What should I say and how should I act so that He may start loving me

ਮੁਹੋਂ ਕਿ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੁਣਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥

If our actions are 'approved', the Grace of the Master will liberate us. The stress is significantly more on righteous living than on theoretical discussions. The Satguru says :

Truth is great; but greater still is truthful living.

ਸਚੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥ (*Sri Rag M. I*)

In this way we come to a sort of *Dharam Chakkar*. If our actions are good, we please the Lord, and when He is pleased, we meet the Guru. When we meet the Guru, his touch generates the inherent godly virtues and values in us and our actions become good and get 'approved'. So this circle goes on as an escalator. But this we have to catch and step upon, wherever we can, to go up. The easiest way is, therefore, to run to the Guru and cling to his Lotus Feet :

Rush to the refuge of the Guru.

ਗੁਰ ਸਰਣਾਈ ਭਜਿ ਪਏ

When we have got hold of the Guru's Feet, he will, no doubt, try to disentangle his Feet from our grasp. But the Guru is not averse to it. By this, he only wants to test our faith, our devotion and our persistent patience. If we stand and pass the test, the Guru will pervade us. It is then the Guru who functions, and we become only his instruments. When the Guru resides in us, he brings along all his forces, strength, power, treasures and high spirit (ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ). As the Guru is inseparable from God, the Supreme Being (*Akal Purkh*) also comes with him. Then both God and Guru (*Waheguru*) manifest in us. A Khalsa then becomes a *lakh* and a quarter from a single individual.

This approach being the shortest and straightest, is naturally tough and difficult. The main problem to solve in this way is the moulding of the mind to proper attitude. But this is the easiest way which takes us to *Anandpur*, the city of calm, cheerfulness, and eternal bliss.

### *The Base*

The whole structure of Sikhism is based on the conception of the Formless Eternal Being (ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਸਰੂਪ ਅਕਾਲ). The conception of our God-head is that of the Formless and Timeless

Reality, Truth, that was and shall ever be. So our Guru now is also formless as the *Shabd*. Similarly, our way of worship is also formless, being solely devotional singing. The two main pillars on which the structure of Sikhism stands, are *simran* and *sewa*.



## THE WORKING OF THE MOVEMENT

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It is important to see how this movement started by Guru Nanak in his Divine Vision worked, progressed and succeeded; how the seed that Guru Nanak sowed, sprouted, foliated, blossomed and bore fruit. Guru Nanak was the great architect who laid out the master plan in every meticulous detail, which his eight successors implemented and developed, and the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, finally brought to perfection.

Born in 1469 A.D., Guru Nanak spent almost 27 years of his life in observing, studying, and gauging the ailments inflicting the whole mankind, and thinking out the remedial solutions. At that time two cultures, the Aryan and the Semitic, were warring with each other for supremacy in India. With a view to reconciling the two warring communities into one brotherhood he raised the slogan, "there is no Hindu and no Mussalman", meaning thereby that they had both fallen from their high ideals and had forgotten God, their common Father. It also meant that they were all the beloved sons and daughters of one Supreme Creator and that it was wrong and sinful to put them into separate categories that quarrelled with each other. And it also meant that they were all equal though they believed in different schools of thought. He, thus, established the base for the principle of Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. His way of propagating his mission and spreading the Movement was through dramatic transformations and spectacular conversions. During his main four tours to spread the Light, he visited the snowclad Kailash Parvat and Tibet in the North, the Far-East, Ceylon in the South, and Mecca, reaching the Red Sea

and the Mediterranean in the West. The Sikh missionary centres were established and set in motion by Guru Nanak for development of his mission. He put Raja Shiv Nab, the ruler of Ceylon to propagate Sikhism in Ceylon; Bhai Lalo, an artisan at Saidpur in Northern Punjab; Kauda, the renowned cannibal, better known as Kauda Raksha, was turned into a missionary and put in charge of the organization in central India; while Sajjan, who was a great thug and killer dreaded in Western Punjab, was in charge of his missionary work at Tulamba near Multan. In the Middle East, Shah Bahlol was put in charge at Baghdad. He got hold of individuals with virile personalities, bubbling energy, original independent vision, and with influence and fame in the *Ilaqa*, irrespective of whether good or bad, and washing their brain of old filth, completely remoulded, transformed them and directed them on to the right path. Thus, their latent virtues were energized by the touch of the Super Mind of the Master. The talent and strength that was misdirected or being frittered away, was controlled, marshalled, channelized and put on the useful, noble, and purposeful path of service and good for humanity. This gave the Movement a forceful start. We find *sangats* coming to have *darshan* of Satguru from Kabul and Qandhar during the time of the fifth Nanak, and during the time of the sixth Guru, bringing offerings of Persian, Iraqi and Arabian horses. And so was the case during the tenth Nanak's time. This shows that all those centres worked as dynamic and living organizations, although the later Gurus did not personally visit those far flung areas.

As a master architect, the Guru knew that an edifice can stand the ravages of the changing times, and maintain its freshness and usefulness only if it is constructed on sound and solid foundation. The edifice of such a society, that the Guru envisaged, could only be founded on the basis of the right sort of individuals who were such consecrated men of God. In the ultimate analysis of the outcome of any physical, political, mental or spiritual conflict or war, the character, attitude, spirit, outlook and forging of values in the individual "man" involved, come to the fore. It is the human being, the individual, with conviction and clarity of purpose in

mind, who comes out victorious.

The Master Architect also knew that any imposition from outside would provoke reaction and result in an uncalled for resistance and heartburning. To force a reform, howsoever much desirable, by order or legislation, is not generally conducive to happiness or general satisfaction. If the attitude of the mind is changed and instead of imposition from without, it becomes an urge from within and a willing and voluntary act, it always provides joy and good feeling. It becomes fulfilment of duty and, therefore, pleasure to the mind. Like collection of money, when imposed from outside, is much resented tax, but when urged from within, it is contribution in fulfilment of one's *dharam*. Forces marching under orders from above are more or less mercenary legions or plundering adventurers, while those who volunteer under the urge of their *dharam* are crusaders, and in the higher sphere of life it is *Akal Purkh Ki Fauj*. People otherwise hesitate to lift dirty utensils and carry mud, but they get cheerful satisfaction and spiritual elation when they cleanse the utensils of the *langar* and vie with each other to carry mud on their heads as was observed at the *karsewa* of the *Amrit Sarowar* at Amritsar and at Fatehgarh Sahib. In almost every case, thus, these two sides of the matter exist and they make all the difference.

Guru Nanak, therefore, got hold of the basic situation. Rather than starting straight away a sect of militant revolutionaries who may not have known the values they would be fighting for, and who would have responded only to fiery slogans and fanatic fervour, he got down to basic resurrection of the spirit of man which had degenerated and decayed to non-entity under centuries of subjugation and exploitation by the priest class (Pandit, Mullah and all) in the name of the church, and by the state, with the ruler coming to be considered a representative of the Divinity, and by the monied class and higher castes. All camouflaged their exactions in the name of God to perpetuate their hold. He undertook first to build the character of man and awaken and free his spirit. By teaching the essential doctrine of *Naam*, he provided the mainstay to the human soul and spirit.

To bring about this resurrection, and regeneration of the individual, and development of his character, Satguru provided the individual first with an anchor. By bringing man into the discipline, i.e., fear of the Fearless One, he, thus, emancipated him from all other fears : the fear of the priest, the fear of the high class, the fear of the state, the fear of the ruler, the mental fear created by superstition and institutionalized formalism and ritualism of religion, and above all the fear of death itself. The fourth Guru, in *Rag Asa*, says :

They who meditate on the Fearless Lord, all their fears vanish.

ਜਿਨ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਜਿਨ ਹਰਿ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਜੀ ਤਿਨਕਾ ਭਉ ਸਭੁ ਗਵਾਸੀ ॥

Again the fifth Guru, in *Rag Gauri*, says :

With the Fearless One dwelling with thee; where do you get the fear from ?

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਸੰਗਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੈ ਬਸੇ ਇਹੁ ਡਰਨੁ ਕਹਾ ਤੇ ਆਇਆ ॥

To bring about this resurrection of the individual, it took the Satguru five generations of society. He started from the lowest step and closest area with an opening for expansion further out.

With this end in view, literacy was given great importance. The recording of the *bani* was started by the first Satguru himself. He popularised Punjabi in Gurmukhi script to bring this about. The second Nanak propagated and spread literacy amongst the Sikhs. During the period of the third Nanak, the *bani* was properly recorded in different volumes which are now safeguarded at different places to this day. I had an occasion and good luck to see one of these volumes at Patiala after partition of the Punjab in 1947 with a friend from the Frontier Province through the good offices of Baba Prem Singh of Hoti Mardan. The other one is said to be at village Ahyapur in the district of Hoshiarpur. The fifth Satguru eventually sat down at Ramsar, the beautiful solitary spot in Amritsar, and composed and compiled the Holy Granth. Eventually, in 1690, the tenth Guru announced that no one amongst his Sikhs had remained unlettered. Every Sikh, young and old, had become literate. This claim was upheld by the fact that when in 1699, the Satguru created the Order of the Khalsa, the Sikhs

who were initiated, kept spreading out, forming parties of five 'Beloved ones' to continue the initiation further. This chain continued until as many as 80,000 Sikhs were initiated into the Order of the Khalsa on one occasion. We know that this initiation can be done only by reciting the five *banis* (compositions of the Satguru). There were no printing presses working in the country then, so that copies could be distributed to every one to help recite the *banis*. Handwritten copies could only be very few. Even these could be made use of only by those who could read. It is obvious, therefore, that every Sikh at that time was not only literate but also was fully conversant with *Gurbani* and remembered by heart all the *banis* comprising the morning, evening and night prayers, in which the 'Initiation' *banis* are distributed for every day recital. This was necessary as the Satguru knew that God-consciousness could be brought about only through education, understanding, knowledge and culture.

To bring about fraternity and equality, the Satguru founded two very important institutions of Sikhism, *sangat* and *pangat*. *Sangat* means a gathering in the presence of the Guru for community worship and deliberations for the general welfare. *Pangat* pertains to community kitchen, the *langar*, where every one sits down to dine in a line irrespective of caste or class. This by itself struck at the root of *Varnashram Dharma*, the mainstay of the Hindus.

When this spiritual re-awakening and regeneration of individual 'man' and resurrection of human values and restoration of consciousness of the self, and mental, moral and social uplift was complete, the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun Dev, announced in *Sri Rag* :

I have built up the Abode of Truth.

ਮੈ ਬਧੀ ਸਚੁ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਹੈ ॥

And gathered in it the Guru's Sikhs after great search.

ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾ ਲਹਦਾ ਭਾਲਿ ਕੈ ॥

The Merciful Lord hath now given the Command,

ਹੁਣਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣ ਦਾ ॥

That no one will henceforth domineer over and give pain to another.



ਪੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਾਣਦਾ ॥

And, all will abide in peace; such being the Rule of Merciful Lord.

ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਵੁਠੀਆ ਇਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਉ ॥

I am the combatant of God's own legion (*Akal Purkh's Fauj*).

ਹਉ ਜੋਸਾਈ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਵਾਨੜਾ ॥

On meeting the Guru, the plume of my *sarband* flutters high up.

ਮੈ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਉਚ ਦੁਮਾਲੜਾ ॥

The spectators hath assembled in the arena to witness my deeds of valour; the Creator Himself witnesseth (the struggle)

ਸਭ ਹੋਈ ਛਿੰਝ ਇਕਠੀਆ ਦਯੁ ਬੈਠਾ ਵੇਖੈ ਆਪਿ ਜੀਉ ॥

Guru Nanak Dev had raised his voice against tyranny, high-handedness and bloodshed at Emnabad during Bābar's invasion of India and courted arrest. Now the fifth Nanak laid down his life for the protection of the 'Values' and 'Virtues' established. The pinnacle of this movement was reached on the burning '*Jeth*' *Sudi* 4th (May 30th, 1606) when at Lahore he offered *shahadat* (martyrdom), death by *yasa*. Amongst the Mughals (Mongols-Mughals), there was a rule, influenced by fear, that if blood is spilt of a man of God, it brings down Divine calamity. So when killing such a person they adopted such means that blood may not be spilled. This rule of theirs was called *yasa*.

Thus, the fifth Satguru set the unique example of perfect non-violence by offering martyrdom. But at the same time, he made it clear that surrendering life as *ahuti* (ਅਹੁਤੀ) and tactic, when not successful, should not mean surrendering values helplessly. So long as life breathes, effort and struggle must continue. When other means have failed, it is ethically and morally justified (ਹਲਾਲ) and even incumbent on a Sikh to resort to force. We find, therefore, that he infused in his successor, the sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind, this outlook, and prepared him in a manner that on the first moment of his accession, at the age of 11, he asked for the sword; again not for one but two swords. It was an evaluation of the symbol. The

swords of *miri* and *piri* representing wordly and spiritual suzerainty were separately worn by the sixth Guru. The final perfected form of this principle was created by the Satguru in his tenth form, when in his hand the two swords merged into one double-edged sword called *khanda*. In the same way, the ninth Nanak, Guru Teg Bahadur, while sacrificing his head for the freedom to practise and have belief in one's chosen faith, prepared his son and successor, the tenth Satguru, for the same purpose. The tenth Guru at the time of his accession was only nine years old. He says in his own words that he was given training in all and various ways and kinds (ਦੀਨੀ ਭਾਂਤ ਭਾਂਤ ਕੀ ਸਿਫ਼ਾ) :

Guru Nanak had said :

To follow His Will cheerfully,

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ

And in his fifth form the Guru exemplified it by cheerfully offering *shahadat*. When Mian Mir, the great Sufi Saint, offered to intervene, he was stopped by the Guru and told to abide cheerfully by the Divine Will. Thus, the acceptance and practice of living in *Hukm* was complete. The words of the fifth Master, in *Rag Maru*, are significant and enlightening:

Lo, the servant of God loveth Him to the end.

ਸੇਵਕ ਕੀ ਉੜਕਿ ਨਿਬਹੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ॥

In his lifetime he serveth his Master, and while quitting the world, he mindeth only Him, and Him alone.

ਜੀਵਤ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵਿਓ ਅਪਨਾ ਚਲਤੇ ਰਾਖਿਓ ਚੀਤਿ ॥

Whatever is the Lord's Command, on that he turneth not his back.

ਜੈਸੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਕੀਨੀ ਠਾਕਰਿ ਤਿਸਤੇ ਮੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਮੋਰਿਓ ॥

And whether sheltered at home or driven out of its refuge, he remaineth in peace and utter calm.

ਸਹਜੁ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਰਖਿਓ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਉਠਿ ਉਆਹੂ ਕਉ ਦਉਰਿਓ ॥

He accepteth privation with joy when such is the Lord's Will, and knoweth not pleasure or pain.

ਆਗਿਆ ਮਹਿ ਭੁਖ ਸੋਈ ਕਰਿ ਸੁਖਾ ਸੋਗ ਹਰਖ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਿਓ ॥

And whatever cometh from God that he accepteth with a cheerful heart.

ਜੋ ਜੋ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਭਇਓ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਾ ਸੋ ਮਾਥੈ ਲੇ ਮਾਨਿਓ ॥

The Master is merciful to the servant and his life here and hereafter is approved.

ਭਇਓ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲੁ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਸੇਵਕ ਕਉ ਸਵਰੇ ਹਲਤ ਪਲਾਤਾ ॥

O, Blessed and successful is the servant of God unto whom the Lord is revealed.

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਸਫਲੁ ਓਹੁ ਆਇਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਖਸਮੁ ਪਛਾਤਾ ॥

During the period of the third Nanak, Guru Amar Das, the missionary work was divided into 22 dioceses called *manjees*, which during the fifth Satguru's time came to be known as *masands*, who spread the Word and the teachings of the Satguru and collected the tithe for the Central Court of the Guru. This system was abolished by the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, when the Khalsa came to its own and the Guru became the Sikh and the Sikh the Guru. Then every member of the brotherhood worked as an institution complete in himself.

## RIGHT APPRAISAL

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No assessment, no evaluation or appreciation of the teachings of the Satguru is possible without correct understanding of the background and the context in which they were given and propagated. To get to correct conclusions and have right appraisal, we have two main sources of information, the scripture (*Gurbani*) and Sikh history. But the anecdotes of Sikh history will have to be tested on the touchstone of *Gurbani* for their veracity. Anything which does not tally with the idea expressed in the *bani* will have to be discarded and which is in accord with the Scripture accepted. To get the right appraisal it is necessary to understand and keep always in mind the most important point on which the whole concept of the Satguru's mission and teaching hinges. It is the continuity of the Guru in ten human forms and finally his omnipresence and dynamic existence amongst us (the Sikhs — as the guiding and driving force, and spirit in the knowledge (*gyan*) adumbrated in the *bani* (The *Shabd* — The Word) in Guru Granth Sahib. It is especially necessary in the case of the sixth and tenth Nanak. No understanding of the life and work of the sixth and tenth Nanak could be justly made without proper appraisal of the movement to which they contributed and lent finality, and without placing them in the perspective of the evolutionary process, of which their life and work are an integral part. We have very definite injunctions in this respect. The fourth Satguru says in *Rag Nat* :

Word is the Embodiment of the Guru and the Guru is in the Word.

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ

The third Nanak in *Rag Sorath* says :

There is only one Word, One Guru, and One Interpretation.

ਇਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਇਕੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਇਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥

The first Satguru in *Sidh Ghost* in *Rag Ramkali* says :

The Word is the Guru; the mind attuned (to the Word) the disciple.

ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

The tenth Satguru repeats :

Attune your mind to the Word Guru :

ਗਿਆਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਤਮ ਉਪਦੇਸਹੁ ॥

Again in *Var Ramkali*, it is made clear :

The light was the same, the way the same, only the body changed.

ਜੋਤਿ ਉਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ ॥

The tenth Satguru himself explains thus :

Nanak assumed the body of Angad,

ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਗਦ ਕੋ ਬਪੁ ਧਰਾ ।

And made his religion current in this world.

ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਿ ਇਹ ਜਗ ਮੋ ਕਰਾ ।

Afterwards Nanak was called Amar Das.

ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਪੁਨਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਹਾਯੋ ।

As one lamp is lit from another.

ਜਨ ਦੀਪਕ ਤੇ ਦੀਪ ਜਗਾਯੋ ।

When the time for the fulfilment of the blessing came.

ਜਬ ਬਰਦਾਨ ਸਮੈ ਵਹੁ ਆਵਾ ।

Ram Das became the Guru.

ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਹਾਵਾ ।

Amar Das gave him the Guruship according to the ancient blessing,

ਤਿਹ ਬਰਦਾਨ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਦੀਆ ।

And took the road to paradise himself.

ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਸੁਰਪੁਰਿ ਮਗੁ ਲੀਆ ।

The holy Nanak was revered as Angad.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਗਦਿ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨਾ ।

Angad was recognized as Amar Das,

ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਅੰਗਦਿ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਾ ।

And Amar Das became Ram Das.

ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਕਹਾਯੋ ।

Those who have clear conscience get the realisation, but not the fools.

ਸਾਧਨ ਲਖਾ ਮੂੜ ਨਹਿ ਪਾਯੋ ।

Generally people considered them all distinct;

ਭਿੰਨ ਭਿੰਨ ਸਬਹੂੰ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨਾ ।

But some rare person recognized that they were all one.

ਏਕ ਰੂਪ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਾ ।

They who understood this obtained perfection.

ਜਿਨ ਜਾਨਾ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਸਿਧ ਪਾਈ ।

Without understanding perfection cannot be obtained.

ਬਿਨ ਸਮਝੇ ਸਿਧ ਹਾਥ ਨ ਆਈ ।

When Ram Das merged with God,

ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਹਰਿ ਸੇ ਮਿਲ ਗਏ ।

He passed on the Guruship to Arjun.

ਗੁਰਤਾ ਦੇਤ ਅਰਜਨ ਭਏ ।

When Arjun went to the Divine Presence,

ਜਬ ਅਰਜਨ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਿਧਾਏ ।

He appointed Hargobind in his place.

ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਤਿਹ ਠਾ ਠਹਿਰਾਏ ।

When Hargobind went to the Lord's presence,

ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਿਧਾਰੇ ।

He seated Hari Rai in his place.

ਹਰੀ ਰਾਇ ਤਿਹ ਠਾ ਬੈਠਾਰੇ ।

Hari Krishan his son afterwards became the Guru.

ਹਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਤਿਨਕੇ ਸੁਤ ਵਏ ।

After him succeeded Teg Bahadur.

ਤਿਨ ਤੇ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਭਏ ।

An instance to illustrate this continuity can be given from the writer's own family history. In the month of *Vaisakh* 1630 A.D., Bhai Rup Chand and his father Bhai Sidhu were getting the *rabi* crop harvested. When they touched the water in a hanging goatskin to quench their thirst, they found it so cold that they thought it worth offering to the Guru and would not touch it themselves

although the heat of the day made them unconscious. The sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind Sahib, was at Daroli at that time. Feeling attracted by his devotee's love and plight, he rushed to them, brought them back to their senses and took water. He was so pleased at their devotion that he bestowed upon them his sword and robes and a horse and took them out to the place where he founded a village for his devotees and named it Bhai Rupa, now in Bathinda district. On the way, he noticed that the sword and the robes that he had bestowed, were being carried on their heads and the horse being led. On being asked, Bhai Sidhu and his son Bhai Rup Chand said that the gifts were too sacred for them to wear or ride upon. This further pleased the Guru who gave them the most coveted title of Bhai (his own brother) and put them in charge of his mission in the cis-Sutlej area. At that time he told the Bhais to keep his gifts, bestowed on them, in trust for the Guru and he would get them back when the time came. And this he (the sixth Nanak) did when as Guru Gobind Singh (tenth Nanak) he reached Dina, near village Bhai Rupa, from Chamkaur and asked for his entrusted weapons, robes and horse.



## GOD

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The Sikh conception of God is as simple as it is comprehensible. At that time the Aryan and Semitic cultures and schools of thought were in conflict in India. The Aryan thought conceived God as immanent only, pervading, discernibly in the creation. While the Semitic conception was of a God sitting above in the seventh heaven and issuing writs and controlling the working of the whole of His creation from there. Satguru told both of them that there was nothing to quarrel about. Both were telling the Truth. He invited them to proceed further and think deeper, and they will find God as both, Absolute as well as Immanent. This he explained in the following words :

Some say He is beyond, outside, while others say He pervadeth all.

ਕੋ ਕਹਤੋ ਸਭ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਕਹਤੋ ਸਭ ਮਹੀਅਉ ॥

His colour is not seen, nor His sign known, His beloved ones, describe them to me.

ਬਰਨੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਚਿਹਨੁ ਨ ਲਖੀਐ ਸੁਹਾਗਨਿ ਸਾਤਿ ਬੁਝਹੀਅਉ ॥

He pervadeth all, lives in every heart, and yet is uncontaminated and unattached.

ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਵਾਸੀ ਲੇਪੁ ਨਹੀ ਅਲਪਹੀਅਉ ॥ (ਜੈਤਸਰੀ ਮ: ੫)

Know the One Supreme Being alone who is within as well as without. This is the Knowledge imparted by the Guru.

ਬਾਹਰਿ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਇਹੁ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਬਤਾਈ ॥ (ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮ: ੯)

He manifests in many ways and forms and still keeps aloof and detached from all.



ਨਾਨਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਰੇ ਬਹੁ ਰੰਗੀ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰਾ ॥ (ਬਿਹਾਗੜਾ ਮ: ੯)

Satguru sums up the conception of God in these words of the first *shlok* of the Holy Granth :

True in the beginning, True in the primeval age.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥

True He is, and True He shall ever be.

ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

The tenth Guru in 33 *Swayyiy* (ਸਵੈਯੇ) says :

Who was and is

ਜੋ ਥਾ ਅਬ ਹੈ ।

and shall ever be.

ਅਰ ਆਗੈ ਊ ਹਵੈ ਹੈ ।

This means that the Sikh doctrine of the Name (of God) is a trenchant, pure, and unadulterated monotheism. In the very beginning of the Holy Granth, Guru Nanak defines God as the highest Unity, in which the Absolute and the Personal are reconciled. He gives the Sikh conception of God as follows :

The One Supreme Being (absolute, personal, immanent (ੴ) whose name is eternal All-Pervading Verity (ਸਤਿਨਾਮ), the Master Creator (ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖ), without fear (ਨਿਰਭਉ), without enmity (ਨਿਰਵੈਰ), Immortal Being (ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ), non-incarnated, unborn (ਅਜੂਨੀ), Self-existent (ਸੇਤੈ), the Enlightener and the Grace (ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ) .

We find that the figure 'One' appended to '*Onkar*' besides signifying God's Unity, also depicts His being a Personality and not merely a Void (ਸੁੰਨ). '*Oung*' (ਓ) means transcendent and '*Kar*' (ਕਾਰ) means immanent. God, revealed to us by Guru Nanak is, therefore, both a transcendent and immanent God, and also above and beyond any conception. He is not like an impotent mechanic fashioning existing matter into the universe. He includes matter and transcends it. He is the Uncreated Creator, the Eternal, the Supreme, the Truth, and a God of Grace : a Personal God who resembles more the monotheistic God of the Semitic religions than any of the gods connected with the pantheistic Hindu conception. He is the Fountain-head of Life and also the Ultimate End of all. The Sikh God is, therefore, Infinite, Formless, Timeless, Uncreated, Self-existent Being (*Nirankar*).

## THE GURU

Next to God is the place of the Guru in Sikhism. The Guru is essential to get Light of Knowledge. The fourth Nanak says :

Without the Guru, it is pitch dark and nothing can be perceived.

ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧਾਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਮਝ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥

Without the Guru, one is conscious not (of God), nor is perfected nor emancipated.

ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਨ ਸਿਸ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

The first Satguru in *Asa di Var* says :

Even if hundreds of moons and thousands of suns shine, there is utter darkness without the Guru.

ਜੇ ਸਉ ਚੰਦਾ ਉਗਵਹਿ ਸੂਰਜ ਚੜਹਿ ਹਜਾਰ ॥

ਏਤੇ ਚਾਨਣ ਹੋਦਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧਾਰ ॥

Again he says :

Without the true Guru no one has attained to God and no one will do so.

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

He resides in the Satguru and reveals Himself through him.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਪੁ ਰਖਿਓਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ ॥

On meeting the Satguru one always gets emancipated because the Guru detaches one of all attachments.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਸਦਾ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਨਿ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮ: ੧)

The fifth Guru has described in detail :

Let no one be misled by illusions in the world.

ਮਤ ਕੋ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲੈ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ॥

Without the Guru no one has got across.

ਗੁਰਬਿਨੁ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਉਤਰਸਿ ਪਾਰਿ ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

The Guru shows the way to the strayer,

ਭੂਲੇ ਕਉ ਗੁਰਿ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

who forsakes all others and gets attached to One God.

ਅਵਰ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

Fear of births and deaths is obliterated.

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਕੀ ਤ੍ਰਾਸ ਮਿਟਾਈ ॥

Boundless is the glory of the Perfect Guru.

ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੀ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਵਡਾਈ ॥

By the Guru's Grace the inverted lotus (heart) blossoms,

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਊਰਧ ਕਮਲ ਬਿਗਾਸ ॥

In the utter darkness Light is shown.

ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਮਹਿ ਭਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਗਾਸ ॥

The Creator is known through the Guru.

ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਸੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥

By the Guru's Grace the ignorant mind has come to believe.

ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤੇ ਮੁਗਧ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥

The Guru is the Creator and Cause of causes.

ਗੁਰੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਕਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥

The Guru-God is and will also be.

ਗੁਰੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਹੋਗੁ ॥

Nanak says, that is what God has revealed.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਇਹੈ ਜਨਾਈ ॥

That without the Guru no one is emancipated.

ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਭਾਈ ॥ (ਗੋਂਡ ਮ: ੫)

The Guru, therefore, reveals the Word, the *Shabd*. He is the connecting link, being in 'spirit' one with the 'Creator' at one end, and at the other, dealing with us as one of us. In dark ignorance, the Guru rends the veil of *maya*, gives the Light and shows the way. It is by the Grace of the Guru that, the egg of superstition breaks, and the mind is illumined :

ਢੂਟੇ ਆਂਡਾ ਭਰਮ ਕਾ ਮਨਹਿ ਭਇਓ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ ॥

The Guru cuts the fetters off the feet and frees the captive.

ਕਾਟਿ ਬੇਰੀ ਪਗਹ ਤੇ, ਗੁਰਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਬੰਦਿ ਖਲਾਸੁ ॥

Satguru has not claimed any monopoly in receiving the *Shabd*, the *Hukam*, and knowing the Divine Will. The *Shabd* has always been revealed as Satguru himself says :

It is the Guru's *Shabd* which emancipated innumerable men of silence and Brahma and Indra and the like.

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਤਰੇ ਮੁਨਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਇੰਦ੍ਰਾਦਿਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾਦਿ ਤਰੇ ॥

And Sanak and Sanandan and myriads of ascetics have received deliverance by the Guru's Grace.

ਸਨਕ ਸਨੰਦਨ ਤਪਸੀ ਜਨ ਕੇਤੇ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਰੇ ॥

The Light and Knowledge, in *Shabd*, have always been revealed to the world. The Aryan schools called the one who brought the message an *avtar*; while the Semitic schools called the revealer a prophet. But there is a difference between the concept of an *avtar*, a prophet and the Guru.

*Avtar* means incarnation. In Sikhism the principle of incarnation is straightaway ruled out, as God is eternal and does not take birth (ਅਜੂਨੀ). The fifth Satguru has very definitely and clearly stated in *Rag Bhairon* :

Man, lost in ignorance, produces false arguments.

ਭਰਮਿ ਭੂਲੇ ਨਰ ਕਰਤ ਕਚਰਾਇਣ ॥

God is above birth and death.

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ॥

You stealthily offer sweets.

ਕਰਿ ਪੰਜੀਰੁ ਖਵਾਇਓ ਚੋਰ ॥

God neither takes birth nor dies, O ! materialist animal understand it.

ਉਹੁ ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਮਰੈ ਰੇ ਸਾਕਤ ਵੋਰ ॥

It is the greatest mistake to try to lure your God to sleep.

ਸਗਲ ਪਰਾਧ ਦੇਹਿ ਲੋਰੋਨੀ ॥

Burnt be that mouth that says God is cast into the womb.

ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ ॥

He is neither born nor dies, nor comes or goes.

ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

Nanak's God is omnipresent and pervades all over.

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

In *Rag Ramkali*, this is further explained :

*Vedas* do not know Thy Greatness.

ਮਹਿਮਾ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਬੇਦ ॥

Nor does Brahma know Thy Mystery.

ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਭੇਦ ॥

No incarnation knew Thy End.

ਅਵਤਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਅੰਤੁ ॥

The infinite transcendent God is incomprehensible.

ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬੇਅੰਤੁ ॥੧॥

He knows His state Himself.

ਅਪਨੀ ਗਤਿ ਆਪਿ ਜਾਨੈ ॥

Others state only hearsay.

ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਅਵਰ ਵਖਾਨੈ ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

Shiva too did not know the mystery.

ਸ਼ੰਕਰਾ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਭੇਦ ॥

The gods were tired of the search.

ਖੋਜਤ ਹਾਰੇ ਦੇਵ ॥

The goddesses also know not the secret.

ਦੇਵੀਆ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨੈ ਮਰਮ ॥

The unfathomable Supreme Being is above all.

ਸਭ ਊਪਰਿ ਅਲਖ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ॥੨॥

The Creator plays as He wills.

ਅਪਨੈ ਰੰਗਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਕੇਲ ॥

He Himself unites and Himself separates.

ਆਪਿ ਬਿਛੋਰੈ ਆਪੇ ਮੇਲ ॥

Some go astray while some are dedicated to Him.

ਇਕਿ ਭਰਮੇ ਇਕਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਾਏ ॥

He Himself makes known what He does.

ਅਪਣਾ ਕੀਆ ਆਪਿ ਜਣਾਏ ॥੩॥

Listen to the truthful evidence of men of God;

ਸੰਤਨ ਕੀ ਸੁਣਿ ਸਾਚੀ ਸਾਖੀ ॥

They state what they observe themselves.

ਸੋ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਜੋ ਪੇਖਹਿ ਆਖੀ ॥

Nanak's God is not affected by virtue or sin,

ਨਹੀ ਲੇਪੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਪੁੰਨਿ ਨ ਪਾਪਿ ॥

He is Self-existent and Himself All in All.

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ॥੪॥੨੫॥੩੬॥ (ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ: ੫)

Amongst the *avtars* are included even fish, tortoise, pig. To put the Satguru in that line would be an insult to Him. When any incarnation of the Supreme Being is rejected out of hand, it will be still a greater insult and travesty of truth to consider the Satguru as an incarnation of somebody else. This point has been unequivocally made clear by the Satguru himself, when in *Var Majh*, the first Satguru states that he is just a minstrel who has been entrusted with the mission of revealing the *Shabd* and spreading Knowledge (*Gian*) :

I, a jobless bard, have been put to service.

ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

Be it night or day, the Order is issued, to sing praises.

ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਵਾਰ ਧੁਰਹੁ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ॥

I, the bard, have been called to the Master's Presence.

ਢਾਢੀ ਸਚੈ ਮਹਿਲ ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ॥

I praise the True One and the robe of honour is bestowed on me.

ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

The bard then sings and spreads the *Shabd*, the Word.

ਢਾਢੀ ਕਰੇ ਪਸਾਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਜਾਇਆ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮ: ੧)

The fourth Guru also says in *Var Sri Rag* :

I am the bard of the Supreme Master come to call at His door.

ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਖਸਮ ਕਾ ਹਰਿ ਕੈ ਦਰਿ ਆਇਆ ॥

We find that this idea of incarnation is repeatedly rejected in *Gurbani*. Guru Nanak Dev in *Maru Solhey* says :

Brahma Vishnu and Mahesh are standing to attention at the service of the Incomprehensible and Limitless God.

ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ ॥ ਉਭੈ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰੈ ॥

There are innumerable others too who are seen bewailing and crying at the Divine Door.

ਹੋਰ ਕੇਤੀ ਦਰਿ ਦੀਸੈ ਬਿਲਲਾਦੀ ਮੈ ਗਣਤ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਕਾਈ ਹੇ ॥

This point of the Guru being an incarnation of the Supreme Being is strongly and finally rejected by the tenth Guru in *Bachittar Natak* :

Those who call me God, will all be thrown into hell.

ਜੋ ਹਮਕੇ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਉਚਰਿ ਹੈ । ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕ ਕੁੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿ ਹੈ ।

Know me as His servant. There should be no doubt in that.

ਮੈ ਕੇ ਦਾਸ ਤਵਨ ਕਾ ਜਾਨਉ । ਯਾ ਮੈ ਭੇਦ ਨ ਰੰਚ ਪਛਾਨਉ ।

I am the Supreme Being's servant come to watch the play in this world.

ਮੈ ਹੋਂ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੇ ਦਾਸਾ । ਦੇਖਨ ਆਇਓ ਜਗਤ ਤਮਾਸਾ ।

Prophet means messenger, who brings and conveys the message, and who spreads and propagates Divine Knowledge.

The Guru can, therefore, to some extent, be called messenger. The word 'Guru' had not been used in this sense before Guru Nanak, as it is understood in Sikhism. The institution of the Guru amongst the Sikhs is very special and peculiar. The Guru not only delivered the message, laid down postulates and showed the way, but took the Sikh (disciple) by the hand and saw that he tread it with full responsibility, fitness, and self-confidence. That is why we find every Sikh, every Khalsa, fighting and functioning as an institution in himself. To complete this mission, the Guru took ten generations. The peculiar speciality in Sikhism lies in the continuity of the Guru in ten human forms and afterwards the continuity finally laid down in the Guru's omnipresence and dynamic existence amongst the Sikhs as the guiding and driving force and spirit in *Gurbani*, the *Shabd*. As has been said before :

*Bani* is the Guru and the Guru is *Bani*.

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ

The *Shabd* has also been revealed and broadcast from time to time. But the transmitter ceased to function with the end of the human life of the messenger. The Guru's transmitter is always broadcasting the *Shabd*; one has only to tune in his mind to the particular wavelength to receive guidance and light. This any one can do who has a will and devotion, irrespective of any caste, creed, or colour. It is open to all and no one is precluded. In *Rag Maru*, the fifth Nanak says :

Nanak, the Guru, hath instructed all in this Divine wisdom, whosoever heareth, finds emancipation.

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਕਹਤੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸੁਨੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਰਾਨਥ ॥

The tenth Guru in *Akal Ustat*, says :

I speak verily, hear me all ye people,  
those who love God have obtained Him.

ਸਾਚ ਕਹਉ ਸੁਣ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਭਹਿ ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ ।

In *Var Ramkali*, it is said about the continuity of the Guru :

The Light was the same, the way the same, only the body  
changed.

ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਵੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ ॥

The tenth Guru discontinued the Guruship in any human form after him. The spirit (ਜੋਤਿ) remained conserved in *Gurbani*, the *Shabd*, and under its presiding guidance, the Guruship was transferred to the Khalsa in 1699. So the spirit (ਜੋਤਿ) remained in *Gurbani*, and its implementation (ਜੁਗਤਿ) was entrusted to the Khalsa. The third part, the body (ਕਾਇਆ), reached culmination with the tenth Guru. Whether the body is of bones, flesh, blood, muscles, and the sinews, or of stone or metal, or canvas and colour, or paper and ink, it is all perishable. Being composed of matter it keeps changing form. The Guru is immortal and omnipresent, timeless and formless. He is :

The Guru is the Bestower. He is cool and calm as ice.  
He lights the three worlds;

ਗੁਰੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਹਿਵੈ ਘਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਦੀਪਕੁ ਤਿਹ ਲੇਇ ॥

He is ever existing treasure. By bringing our mind to  
belief and faith in him, we get eternal bliss.

ਅਮਰ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਮਨਿ ਮਾਨਿਐ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ, ਮ: ੧)

While revealing the knowledge, the *Shabd*, the Satguru, to explain his teachings, did not create any mythology and did not take cover behind any miracles or show of supernatural powers. Repudiating mythology and symbols of mythology (as also symbolic ritualism), the Guru presented 'Word' (*Shabd*) as symbol. Words are symbols only because they convey a condition of knowledge and information. Words are symbols of their meaningfulness. Thus, Words become paramount carriers of knowledge (*Shabd* and *Gyan*). Realisation comes through knowledge of the *Shabd*. Thus, *Shabd* is the Guru. It is, therefore, the purest of symbols. It cannot be bogged down by mundane



associations and misleading mythological symbolism. *Shabd*, therefore, becomes the purest vehicle of the noblest experiences. To put it in modern terminology, the Guru used the 'myth of the language' which is the most potent, rich and effective form of communication.

The *Shabd* revealed and broadcast by the Satguru, was recorded in his own presence in the Holy Granth. Without meaning any disrespect to any one, the fact is that the Sikh Scripture, the Holy Guru Granth, is the only Scripture in the World which is written, prepared, and sealed by the Founder who directly received the Word. We know that the Scripture of the Buddhists was written 400 years after the death of the Founder, Gautam Buddha. No *Gospel* was composed by or in the lifetime of Jesus Christ. Similarly, the *Quran* was not written by Prophet Mohammed. It was compiled after his death. The *Bhagwad Gita* was not written or composed by Krishna. The names of the authors who composed the *Vedas* or when they were composed are not even known.

The Holy Granth is unique and unparalleled in another respect too. We find in the Holy Guru Granth, besides the *bani* of the Nanaks, the Gurus, the compositions of many other men-of-God, *Bhagats* or *Bhatts*, etc., who belonged to different castes and regions, schools of thought, ways of life and religions, but who had understood the Word of the Master. Their *bani* was given equal status and position to that of the Gurus. It is before them all that we pay our obeisance. The Sikh Scripture thus attains an unequalled greatness and stature. This makes Sikhism unparalleled in cosmopolitanism, catholicism, and tolerance. It will not be wrong to say that no other Scripture in the world can claim this unique and universal position. For instance, we find in the Sikh Scripture the following words :

For dogs devoid of prayer; is not the right way of life.

ਬੇ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਕੁਤਿਆ ਏਹ ਨ ਭਲੀ ਰੀਤਿ ॥

Never to visit the Mosque for five daily prayers.

ਕਬਹੀ ਚਲਿ ਨ ਆਇਆ ਪੰਜੇ ਵਖਤ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥

After the tenth Guru, the position is that under the Supreme Authority, Light and Guidance of *Gurbani*, the Guruship stands

entrusted to the Khalsa. This transfer was complete and absolute in 1699 when the Satguru himself asked for and received *amrit* from the five Beloved Ones. He thus became himself the disciple and himself the Guru. (ਅਪੇ ਗੁਰ ਚੇਲਾ)

Some writers have said that the transfer of Guruship to Guru Granth Sahib happened at Nanded on the banks of the Godavari. Some others have said that this was done at Chamkaur. This does not seem to be a correct reading of facts. While leaving Chamkaur, the Satguru put in charge of the place a Sikh who very much resembled the Satguru. There was no question of any Guruship being transferred. What happened at Nanded was that when the tenth Guru prepared to leave this world, the Sikhs asked him whom they were to look up to for guidance and light. To this, he replied that they have the *Shabd*, compiled and conserved in the Holy Granth Sahib. Since then the Holy Granth began to be called Guru Granth Sahib. But the handing over and transfer of Guruship (ਗੁਰਿਆਈ) was definitely complete and final at Anandpur as has been explained before.

At Nanded, a copy of the final edition of the Holy Granth called Damdami Bir was specified from which to take Guidance and Light. Since then the final Damama edition came to be known as Guru Granth Sahib.

This, however, does not mean that the Sikhs were asked to become 'book worshippers.'

The injunctions in *Gurbani* on this point are very clear :

Blessed, Blessed, is the true Guru, the Formless Being,  
Infinite is whose End.

ੴ ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ ॥

The image of the Guru in *Rag Gaund* is described by the fifth Nanak as such :

Meditate on the image of the Guru by submitting your mind to the Guru's *Shabd*.

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਧਿਆਨ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨ ॥

Bhai Gurdas has made it clear thus :

The image of the Guru is the Guru's *Shabd*.

ਗੁਰ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਹੈ ।

When some devoted followers of the sixth Satguru brought the royal painter artist from Delhi and asked for Satguru's permission for having his picture painted, the request was politely but firmly refused in the above words of Bhai Gurdas. Basically the Sikhs are spirit-born people. The very idea of a physical form is materialistic. The respect and obeisance we pay to Guru Granth Sahib is because *Gurshabd* is conserved in it, and it is not because we are book worshippers. That will amount to idol worship which is basically opposed to Sikhism. The compilation of the Holy Granth became necessary because as early as during the period of the second and third Satgurus, *Gurbani* available freely to the Sikhs, began to be tampered with, adulterated and corrupted. Since this compilation by the fifth Guru, the purity and originality of *Gurbani* has been very strictly observed and protected. There is no 'Institutionalisation' of religion in Sikhism and there is no 'Church' as such. No body, not even the *Panj Pyaras* or for that matter any form of '*Gurmatta*', the highest authority to legislate, can touch the tenets laid down in *Gurbani* in Guru Granth Sahib. The rule has always been most strictly enforced. Baba Ram Rai, son of the 7th Nanak, Guru Har Rai, on account of his learning and talents, was sent to the court of Aurangzeb at Delhi to explain some matters. There, obviously under the influence of the Emperor and to find an easy way out, he changed only one word of the *Gurbani* from '*Musalman*' to '*Beiman*'. When the Satguru came to know of it, he at once disowned Baba Ram Rai and ordered him not to show his face to the Satguru again. The Khalsa, too, is entrusted with only the interpretation of the spirit and guidance in the *bani*.

History tells us that after delegating of the Guruship to the Khalsa, under the supreme guidance of *Gurbani*, in 1699 the tenth Satguru brought into actual practice the spirit of democracy thus introduced. He subordinated even his considered opinion to the wishes and decisions of the Khalsa. Two illustrative instances from Sikh history can be quoted in this respect — evacuation of Anandpur Sahib and leaving Chamkaur Sahib:

When the Sikhs were besieged in the Fort at Anandpur by the Mughal Army and the forces of the Hindu Hill *Rajas*, the Sikhs

started feeling the impact. Some of them even lost heart and began to beseech and persuade the Guru to agree to the proposals of the besieging hordes to evacuate Anandpur Sahib. The Satguru advised them not to be ensnared by and believe in the oaths of the enemy and told them to be brave and hold on for a few days more and everything will be alright. No wonder he had in his mind his valiant followers from the Malwa tract in the Cis-Sutlej area, who had been deliberately kept out of Anandpur and not invited even to the great Vaisakhi occasion of 1699. But the tightening seige had affected the encircled Sikhs, some of whom began to lose patience and increased their pressure on the Satguru by persuading the ladies of the Satguru's household to advise the Guru to leave Anandpur. The Satguru explained to the Sikhs the dangers and consequences of such a wrong step. But when the Sikhs still persisted, he demanded in writing from them their decision to leave and allowed them to go. When those who were left behind too insisted, Satguru gave in and agreed to evacuate the Fort against his own considered judgement. What terrible atrocities fell on the entourage of the Guru are too well known to need recounting here. But the Satguru never complained that a wrong step was taken.

In the same way, when they were besieged in the fortress at Chamkaur, the tenth Master wanted to fight to the end against the enemy. But the Sikhs with him decided and commanded him to leave the scene of battle because they realised that if he survived, the Sikhs will survive too. The Satguru submitted to the wishes of the Khalsa and with a couple of companions, left the fortress at night and with the help of his devoted Muslim friends got to safety and again organised the Sikh forces.

## THE KHALSA

It will be worth noting what the Khalsa is expected to be like, who has been bestowed a part of Guruship :

Sikhs as a whole, are known as the *Panth*. *Panth* includes all sorts of Sikhs whether perfect or imperfect, novice or fully responsible, *sehajdhari* or *amritdhari*. Any one who believes in the Guru and *Gurbani* and has faith in no one else, cannot be denied to be a Sikh and, therefore, is a member of the *Panth*. For every Sikh, there is a bar. When he (she) crosses this bar, he (she) is elevated to the selection grade, and after having received *amrit* he (she) becomes Khalsa, a member of the *Akal Purkh's Fauj* (Army of God), who surrender their life and are tested and consecrated with the sword, a class of God-conscious men, saint-warriors, out to protect the good and spread goodness and punish evil-doers and extirpate evil. The tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, defines the Khalsa in these words :

He who keeps alight the unextinguishable torch of truth,  
and never wavers from the thought of One God,

ਜਾਗਤ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ, ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ ।

He who has full love for and confidence in God, does not put his faith, even by mistake, in fasting or the graves of Muslim saints, Hindu crematoriums, or Jogi's places of sepulchre;

ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਸਜੈ, ਬ੍ਰਤ ਗੋਰ ਮੜੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ।

He who recognises the One God and no pilgrimages, alms giving, non-destruction of life, penances, or austerities; ਤੀਰਥ ਦਾਨ ਦਇਆ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ, ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹਿ ਏਕ ਪਛਾਨੈ । •

And in whose heart the Light of the Perfect One shines,  
he is to be recognised as a pure member of the Khalsa.

ਪੂਰਨ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਗੈ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਿਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ ।

The dynamic presence of the Guru in *Gurshabd*, functions then in the Sikhs as the driving force. A Sikh is just like mouldable clay in the hands of the Satguru.

The Khalsa was not created out of vengefulness. It was not created impulsively. Nor was it created as a 'time-server', a strategic step, or as a reaction to any barbarous act or the martyrdom of the ninth Nanak, Guru Teg Bahadur. The martyrdoms of the fifth and ninth Satguru, were significant and important stages in the process of development. They steeled the hearts against injustice and tyranny. The Khalsa was created at the pleasure of *Akal Purkh* (ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਮਉਜ) and as ordained by Him. It was created after full thought, thorough deliberation, and meticulous planning. (ਤਬ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਰਚਿਓ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਾਬਤ ਮਰਦਾਨਾ ।) It was created by the Satguru, as Lepel Griffin has said, like Jupiter taking out Minerva from his thigh.

Guru Nanak Dev gave the clarion call :

If thou art zealous of playing the game of love,

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥

Then enter upon my Path with thy head on thy palm.

ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥

Yes, once thou set foot on this Path,

ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ॥

Then find not a way out, but lay down thy head.

ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥

This call was made and promise demanded, which his followers freely and spiritedly fulfilled, when at Anandpur Sahib, the tenth Nanak repeated this call and the five 'Beloved Ones' came forth prepared to sacrifice their heads. Guru Nanak had sown the seed which his eight successors cultured, nurtured, fortified, and irrigated with their sweat and blood and this was brought to final fruition by the tenth Nanak in 1699.

Every time the Guruship was to be passed on, the recipient was put to severe test. In the same way the tenth Satguru when

passing on the Guruship to the Khalsa under the Supreme Instruction and Guidance of *Gurbani*, put the Sikhs to a test by the sword. To face the blood dripping sword of the Satguru, five *Pyaras* one by one volunteered to offer their heads. Previously in such tests only one personality got through. This time as many as five persons came forward. If the call had been further made, certainly more Sikhs would have volunteered and passed the test. Guru Nanak's movement, therefore, reached its apex in 1699. On this day these five *Pyaras* were first administered *amrit* of the *khanda* by the Satguru and then the Satguru requested and himself received *amrit* from the five Beloved Ones. Thus, the Guru became the Sikh and Sikh the Guru. Bhai Gurdas says :

Hail, wonderful Gobind Singh ! Yourself the Guru and yourself the disciple.

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪੇ ਗੁਰ ਚੇਲਾ ।

Such a development was unknown and unparalleled in history before. The leaders previously had functioned as shepherds to look after their disciples as sheep and cows. This day, the birthday of the Khalsa, is our great day. It was the day of culmination. Satguru's mission, after 200 years of calculated, persistent planned efforts, sacrifices and hard work, came to be fulfilled and the ideal set by the Satguru reached its perfection on this day. No date, so far, has ever been known of the creation of a Nation. It could not be determined. It is a special peculiarity of the Khalsa that not only its birthday but even the year of its creation can be pin-pointed.

The head of a Sikh, having been offered and accepted, becomes that of the Guru. It is in trust with him. It is, therefore, incumbent on a Sikh to carry the head high and not to bow it before a mortal or any one who took birth and died. It shall only bow and bend before God's *Hukam*.

The Sikh way of salutation also changed after this development. Previously, when a Sikh saw a Sikh, they used to touch one another's feet. In *Rag Suhi* the fourth Guru said :

Whenever a Sikh of the Guru is seen, repair to his feet in all humility.

ਜੇ ਦੀਸੈ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਨਿਵਿ ਨਿਵਿ ਲਾਗਉ ਪਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

After being entrusted with the Guruship and his enrollment in the *Akal Purkh's Fauj*, his status soared high, and a Sikh began to greet a Sikh saying :

The Khalsa is of God-Guru (*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa*);  
All victory is of God-Guru (*Waheguru ji ki Fateh*).

It will be interesting to note the significant implication of this development produced amongst the Sikhs. The tenth Satguru's four *Chhands* in connection with this occasion are enlightening.

Seeing these developments, Kesho, the Brahmin priest, noticed that offerings, gifts, and all the money, that these priests extorted and received, were being stopped by the Sikhs and the Guru Darbar, and diverted towards the needs and causes of their own and of the *Panth*. He flared up and full of anger went to the Satguru and spoke his mind. He even spoke disrespectfully about the whole matter and about the Sikhs as coming from low castes. The Satguru in his usual polite way replied, which is recorded in the following four *Chhands* of the tenth Satguru :

Whatever God had written in thy destiny thou hast received, O Brahmin ! Banish thy regrets.

ਜੇ ਕੁਛ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਿਯੋ ਬਿਧਨਾ, ਸੇਉ ਪਾਈਯਤ, ਮਿਸਰ ਜੂ ਸੋਕ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ ।

It is not my fault. It escaped my memory altogether. Do not be angry.

ਮੇਰੇ ਕੁਛ ਅਪਰਾਧ ਨਹੀ, ਗਯੋ ਯਾਦ ਤੇ ਭੂਲਿ ਨ ਕੋਪ ਚਿਤਾਰੇ ।

I shall send good clothes and bedding straight away. Be thoroughly assured of this.

ਬਾਗੋ ਨਿਹਾਲੀ ਪਠੈ ਦੈਹੋ ਆਜ ਭਲੇ ਤੁਮਕੋ, ਨਿਸਚੈ ਜਿਯ ਧਾਰੇ ।

All Khatriis are created by the Brahmins. But on my Sikhs here you better have kindness and (leave them alone).

ਛਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਭੈ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਿਪ੍ਰਨ ਕੇ, ਇਨਹੂੰ ਪੈ ਕਟਾਛ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੈ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ ।੧।

Then the Sikhs, the Khalsa, is lauded in the next two *Chhands* :

My victories in battle have been through their favour; through their favour I have made gifts;

ਜੁੱਧ ਜਿਤੇ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ, ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁ ਦਾਨ ਕਰੇ ।

Through their favour all my troubles have been removed; through their kindness again my house is replenished;



ਅਘ ਓਘ ਟਰੇ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ, ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਫੁਨ ਧਾਮ ਭਰੇ ।

Through their favour I have acquired knowledge; through their kindness all my enemies have been destroyed; ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁ ਬਿੰਦਿਆ ਲਈ, ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਭ ਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਮਰੇ ।

Through their kindness I am exalted; otherwise there are millions of poor people like me.

ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈਂ ਨਹੀ ਮੇਸੇ ਗਰੀਬ ਕੋਰ ਪਰੇ ।੨।

To serve them pleaseth me; service of any other is not dear to me.

ਸੇਵ ਕਰੀ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਭਾਵਤ, ਅਉਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸੁਹਾਤ ਨ ਜੀ ਕੇ ।

To bestow gifts on them alone is proper; to make gifts to others is not profitable.

ਦਾਨ ਦੀਯੋ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਭਲੇ, ਅਰ ਆਨਕੋ ਦਾਨ ਨ ਲਾਗਤ ਨੀਕੇ ।

To bestow gifts on them alone will bear fruit hereafter and bring praise in this world; to bestow on others is altogether useless.

ਆਗੈ ਫਲੈ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਦਯੋ, ਜਗ ਮੈ ਜਸ, ਅਉਰ ਦਯੋ ਸਭ ਫੀਕੇ ।

All the wealth in my house, with my soul and body, is for them.

ਮੇ ਗ੍ਰਹ ਮੈ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਤਨ ਤੇ ਸਿਰ ਲਉ ਧਨ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ।੩।

Hearing all this, the Missar (Brahmin):

With agony and anger the Missar in his heart burnt like dry grass.

ਚਟ ਪਟਾਇ ਚਿਤ ਮੈ ਜਰਿਯੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਣ ਜਿਉ ਕੁੱਧਤ ਹੋਇ ।

Realising the loss of his income and in anxiety for his future provision, the Missar began to weep and cry.

ਖੋਜ ਰੋਜਿ ਕੇ ਹੋਤ ਲਗ, ਦਯੋ ਮਿਸਰਜੂ ਹੋਇ ।੪।

In the second line of the above *Chhands*, the words "it escaped my memory altogether" are very significant. They depict that the Brahmin priest was not at all in the picture or consideration at the Guru's Court and would have no place amongst the Sikhs.

## SIMRAN

Sikhism is based on two main principles — harmony and clean actions (ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮ). The fifth Guru says in *Gauri Sukhmani* :

Meditate on the Lord's Name and do what is clean.

ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮੁ ॥

*Simran* literally means remembering. In *Gurbani* we find also the word, ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿ, etc., used for meditation.

### *On What to Concentrate*

It is of basic significance to determine on what to concentrate during the practice of *simran*. The tenth Master in his thirty-three *Sawaiyas* says :

Some worship Brahma as the God, others point to Shiv as God,

ਕੋਊ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਤ ਹੈ ਅਰ ਕੋਊ ਮਹੇਸ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਤੈ ਹੈ ।

Some say that Vishnu is the Lord of the world, and that by worshipping Him all sins are erased;

ਕੋਊ ਕਹੈ ਬਿਸਨੋ ਬਿਸਨਾਇਕ ਜਾਹਿ ਭਜੇ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਕਟੈ ਹੈ ।

Think on this, thousand times, O fool, at the last hour all thy gods will forsake thee.

ਬਾਰ ਹਜਾਰ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਅਰੇ ਜੜ ਅੰਤ ਸਮੇ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਤਜ ਜੈ ਹੈ ।

Meditate on Him in Thy heart Who was, is, and ever shall be.

ਤਾਂਹੀ ਕੋ ਧਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨ ਹੀਏ ਜੋ ਥਾ ਅਬ ਹੈ ਅਰ ਆਗੇਊ ਹੈ ਹੈ ।

At the very beginning of the Holy Granth, we have clear injunction as to Whom to remember and on Whom to concentrate.

The first *shlok* gives the definition thus :

The True One was in the beginning, before all ages began;  
The True One exists even now, and shall for ever be.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ, ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

This is preceded by a clear cut concise conception of the Satguru about the Ultimate Truth :

The One Supreme Being, Whose Name is Eternal Verity,  
the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, Immortal, Unborn,  
Self-existent, the Enlightener; and Grace.

The fifth Guru in *Rag Maru* has also clarified it :

In the heart cherish the Timeless being, and remember  
Him day and night.

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਰਿਦੈ ਧਿਆਇਦਾ, ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਣ ਜਪੈਥਾ ॥

Because Sikhism enjoins upon the worship of the Formless God (ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ), Who is :

God hath no quoit or marks, no colour, no caste, no  
lineage.

ਚਕ੍ਰ ਚਿਹਨੁ ਅਰੁ ਬਰਨ ਜਾਤਿ ਅਰੁ ਪਾਤਿ ਨਹਿਨ ਜਿਹ ॥

No form, no complexion, no outline, no costume, none  
can in any way describe Him.

ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਅਰੁ ਰੇਖ ਭੇਖ ਕੋਊ ਕਹਿ ਨ ਸਕਤ ਕਿਹ ॥

But God, the Creator, can be observed functioning in His Manifestation, Creation, and Nature wherein He obviously works meticulously (ਤਾਕੇ ਤਾਕ) as Guru Nanak says in *Var Asa* :

Bless Thee, O Thou, Manifest in Nature.

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ ॥

It is further explained in *Rag Parbhati* :

The Creator is in His manifest creation, and the creation  
is the Creator, Who is present everywhere.

ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਖਲਕ ਖਲਕ ਮਹਿ ਖਾਲਿਕੁ, ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸ੍ਵਥ ਠਾਈ ॥

Satguru's conception of God can be summed up somewhat in the following way : He is both *Nirgun* (Absolute) as well as *Sargun* (Personal). Before there was any creation, God was contained absolutely in Himself. At the time when He manifested Himself, there was none else. Taking counsel with Himself, what He did, came to pass. There was no world, nor any virtue or sin, or

any caste, creed, or gender. There was only the Formless One Himself. When He thought of making Himself *Sargun* or manifest in creation, He became related to what is called Name (*Naam*). To manifest Himself He made nature where He established His seat, and is immanent, diffused everywhere in the form of Love.

According to Sikhism, God is not an abstract imagination, but is a Personal Functioning Being. He is the Father of all, shaping the world, and supporting all from within. But He does not take birth. He has no incarnations. He Himself stands for all creative agencies. He Himself is All-in-All and is independent of all material conditions. There can be no question of creating the Creator, nor can He be set up as an image. (ਥਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ ॥).

So, it is such a God, All-in-All, the Uncreated One, on Whom we have to meditate and Whose Name we have always to repeat, and in Whose presence we have to live and act.

*Simran* is meant to take us from the *Sthul* (*Sargun*) to *Sukham* (*Nirgun*) God. Development in this process takes place through stages which can be enumerated as follows :

The first is to recite and repeat the Name audibly with the tongue.

Had I a hundred thousand tongues instead of one, Nay, if twenty times as many,

ਇਕ ਦੂ ਜੀਭੋ ਲਖ ਹੋਹਿ ਲਖ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਲਖ ਵੀਸ ॥

I would call upon the Name of God hundred thousand times with each tongue.

ਲਖੁ ਲਖੁ ਗੋੜਾ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ॥

In this path leading to the Master these are steps which we have to mount to become one with Him.

ਏਤੁ ਰਾਹਿ ਪਤਿ ਪਵੜੀਆ ਚੜੀਐ ਹੋਇ ਇਕੀਸ ॥ (ਜਪੁ)

and :

The tongue that utters not the Name should better be cut up bit by bit.

ਰਸਨਾ ਜਪੈ ਨ ਨਾਮੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਟੀਐ ॥ (ਫੁਨਹੇ ਮ: ੫)

This is the first step, which being audible keeps ears and mouth occupied, but along with it we have to occupy the mind also

by devoting it to what we recite. To understand the meaning is, therefore, necessary for further advance. Without understanding we will just be repeating like parrots. The ears are occupied in hearing the Creator functioning in His creation (ਅਖੀਂ ਕੁਦਰਤ, ਕੰਨੀ ਬਾਣੀ ).

I see only God and hear only Him and speak of Him alone.

ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਦੀਸੈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਏਕੁ ਏਕੁ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ ॥

For, it is all manifestation of the same Creator;  
without that One God I know of none other.

ਆਤਮ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਕਰਣਹਾਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੀਐ ॥ (ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ: ੫)

The second step follows when the repetition becomes inaudible and continues without break with every breath and morsel. In *Var Gauri*, the fourth Nanak says :

The Guru's Sikh who remembers God with every breath and morsel is loved by the Guru.

ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥

If the word *Waheguru* is being repeated for *simran*, then inhale with *Wahe* and exhale with *Guru*. This practice will help the recitation of the Name by itself in every condition. But along with it the mind must also be kept devoted towards His bounties, kindnesses and His immanence in everything.

One who cherishes the Name in his heart,

ਉਰਿ ਧਾਰੈ ਜੋ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

sees the Lord reflected in all others,

ਸਰਬ ਮੈ ਪੇਖੈ ਭਗਵਾਨੁ ॥

and salutes Him every moment.

ਨਿਮਖ ਨਿਮਖ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਨਮਸਕਾਰੈ ॥

Such a man is capable of saving everybody.

ਨਾਨਕ ਓਹੁ ਅਪਰਸੁ ਸਗਲ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੈ ॥

It is always essential to do *simran* in His Grace and in deep gratefulness. *Simran* should be continued :

Rising, sitting and in sleep remember the Name,

ਊਠਤ ਬੈਠਤ ਸੋਵਤ ਨਾਮ ॥

for this is the constant practice of the servant.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨ ਕੈ ਸਦ ਕਾਮ ॥

When this repetition becomes a habit and the mind gives up feeling bored but enjoys the calm sweetness which *simran* affords, then the stage arrives about which the Guru says :

Those who do not forget but cherish the Name of the Lord in their mind while breathing and eating,

ਜਿਨਾ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਨ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਾ ਮਨਿ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ॥

are blessed, for they alone are perfect saints.

ਧੰਨੁ ਸਿ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਪੂਰਨੁ ਸੇਈ ਸੰਤੁ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਗਉੜੀ ਮ: ੫)

The third stage is then reached, when the inaudible recitation and repetition is re-enforced with the mind remaining devoted night and day to the reality of the Timeless Being :

In the heart meditate upon the Timeless Being and remember Him night and day.

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਰਿਦੈ ਧਿਆਇਦਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਜਪੈਥਾ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਰੂ ਮ: ੫)

When the Name is never forgotten and while sitting, walking, doing worldly duties, we remain and work in the presence of the Supreme Master. Our mind remains in the Divine Presence without any effort — this is the fourth stage called the stage of *Sahej Anand* (Undisturbed Bliss). Then the *Shabd* and our spiritual insight coincide and *simran* continues without any recitation, meditation or effort. This is called (ਅਜਪਾ ਜਾਪ). Here the mind begins to enjoy untold bliss of the Divine Nectar :

When with good fortune mind begins to feel the presence of the Lord, it reposes in the state of Eternal Bliss.

ਸਹਜ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਮਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ (ਸੁਹੀ ਮ: ੪)

This is the top-most stage to be achieved.

*Simran* can very easily be continued while we are walking or riding a horse, a car or a bus or while ploughing the field, sitting on a truck or tractor or churning curd for butter or cooking meals, fanning the *sangat*, or serving the *pangat* or doing any other service or work. Discussing points in *bani* and anecdotes from history depicting the sufferings and sacrifices the Sikhs and Satguru bore to bring about our uplift and spiritual enlightenment and talking about the unlimited bounties, grace and blessings showered on us by the Satguru as compared to our own weaknesses and worthlessness, are in a way, a part of *simran*. Remembering the

battles fought for our deliverance and other acts of the Satguru to uphold righteousness and exact justice and stem the tide of bigotted tyranny, also form a part of *simran*. Feeling grateful and offering thanks while sitting by the fire in the biting cold or reposing under a fan and before a cooler in burning heat of the day and enjoying other comforts are also a sort of *simran*.

No special age is set for *simran*. It should be started straight away lest this span of life is snapped and we are called to account. The bell may toll and the time be up any moment. Nobody can vouchsafe whether the next breath will come or not (ਮਤੁ ਕਿ ਜਾਪੈ ਸਾਹੁ ਆਵੈ ਕਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਰਾਮ). Experience also tells that it becomes very difficult, almost impossible, to concentrate the mind when in pain or suffering from an ailment. It can best be done in good health and while we are fit. In *Rag Bhairon*, we get the clear warning in these words :

So long as your age and health are good,

ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਜਰਾ ਰੋਗੁ ਨਹੀ ਆਇਆ ॥

so long as time has not overpowered the body,

ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਕਾਲਿ ਗ੍ਰਸੀ ਨਹੀ ਕਾਇਆ ॥

so long as your speech has not faltered,

ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਬਿਕਲ ਭਈ ਨਹੀ ਬਾਨੀ ॥

O mind ! dwell on the Master who supports the Universe.

ਭਜਿ ਲੇਹਿ ਰੇ ਮਨ ਸਾਰਿਗਪਾਨੀ ॥

If you do not meditate now, then when will you do it ?

ਅਬ ਨ ਭਜਸਿ ਭਜਸਿ ਕਬ ਭਾਈ ॥

For, when the end approaches no meditation will be possible.

ਆਵੈ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਭਜਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥

Time is fast passing by. We should better take the time by the forelock and imbibe *simran* in our heart, making it an inseparable part of our life in such a way that even in distress, calamity, adversity and shock of suffering, the remembrance is not disrupted.

We should set out to do *simran* with a concentrated, clear mind and with consciousness of the presence of the Providence, with spirit and prayer :

According to my actions I may not find a place even in

hell; I depend only on Your Grace.

ਅਪਣੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਰ ਨਰਕ ਹੂੰ ਨ ਪਾਵਉ ਠਉਰ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਬਿਰਦ ਕੋ ਆਸਰੇ ਸੰਭਾਰ  
ਹਉ । (ਪਾ: ੧੦)

and :

Grant me understanding to sing Thy praises,

ਤੇਰੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਾ ਦੇਹਿ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥

so that I may abide in Truth in accordance with Your Will.

ਜੈਸੇ ਸਚ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਉ ਰਜਾਈ ॥ (ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ: ੧)

During this progress, naturally there will be some hurdles, difficulties, and obstacles which one may have to face and overcome. For instance, people begin to talk and criticise, some in praise and some to ridicule, that such and such person has become a *bhagat* and is posing to be a spiritual person. This will create pride and fan the ego and after some time offerings and other services will begin to pour in abundance. This onslaught has to be safeguarded by inculcating humility in the mind :

I am sacrificed to that Guru-conscious person who has inculcated humility in the mind.

ਹਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਘੋਲਿ ਘੁਮਾਇਆ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਰਿਦੈ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਆਵੈ । (Bhai Gurdas)

We should proceed unmindful of them all as :

I now seek the Master's protection after all.

ਅਬ ਹਮ ਚਲੀ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਹਾਰਿ ॥

O my God, I have sought Your refuge, save me or punish me as You will.

ਜਬ ਹਮ ਸਰਣਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕੀ ਆਈ ਰਾਖੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਭਾਵੈ ਮਾਰਿ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

The clever flatteries of the people have been cast in the fire.

ਲੋਕਨ ਕੀ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ਉਪਮਾ ਤੇ ਬੈਸੰਤਰਿ ਜਾਰਿ ॥

Let them say good or bad, I have surrendered myself.

ਕੋਈ ਭਲਾ ਕਹਉ ਭਾਵੈ ਬੁਰਾ ਕਹਉ ਹਮ ਤਨੁ ਦੀਓ ਹੈ ਢਾਰਿ ॥

Anybody who seeks Your protection, O Master, save him with Your kindness.

ਜੇ ਆਵਤ ਸਰਣਿ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਕਿਰਪਾਧਾਰਿ ॥

Nanak has sought Your protection, O Master, save his honour.



ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਣਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਲਾਜ ਮੁਰਾਰਿ ॥

At a certain stage, the nearness to the Divine Master starts to affect what one says. If one begins to indulge in showering blessings and curses, whatever is earned and gained is then lost. In advanced stage of *simran*, a very interesting hurdle is sometimes experienced. Our mind (*atma*), when deep in *simran*, sometimes leaves the physical body and soars high. It enjoys the spiritual flight. But as we have not yet reached the stage of perfect harmony, a lurking fear steps in and works like a spoke in a moving wheel, the fear that the *atma* may not find its way back to the body. The incidence of Baba Ram Rai's end is recollected. Baba Ram Rai used to practise yoga and indulge in enjoying spiritual flights leaving his physical body lying. One day when the attendant knowing this practice of Baba was away on some work, people seeing the body thus lying motionless thought that Baba Ram Rai was dead and cremated the body.

In this state of *simran*, fear of the unknown around the corner becomes another serious obstacle. If we have a clear conscience and nothing to be shy of in our actions, this fear and hesitation turn into joy and enthusiasm (ਚਾਉ) to view and enjoy the unseen. It is sustained effort and understanding of the *Shabd* that help overcome such hurdles. When these hurdles are crossed and super-natural powers generated are subdued, our intelligence and spiritual insight is energised. As a consequence, the vision is widened and one gets flashes of the unknowable past and future and other unperceivable happenings. The visions, the beauteous flashes and other experiences that we get as we advance in the process of *simran*, cannot be described. These can only be felt and cherished by personal experience. They are like a sweet nectar whose taste can only be enjoyed by the one who drinks it. As is said in *Rag Gauri* :

It is like sweet wine of Mahua flower;

he alone can know its taste who has drunk it.

ਅਲਉਤੀ ਕਾ ਜੈਸੇ ਭਇਆ ਬਰੇਡਾ, ਜਿਨਿ ਪੀਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥ (ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ)

And :

If a dumb person tastes the juice of heavenly nectar, how can he describe the taste when asked ?

ਗੁੰਗੈ ਮਹਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਰਸ ਚਾਖਿਆ, ਪੂਛੇ ਕਹਨੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਹੋ ॥ (ਸੋਰਠਿ ਨਾਮ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ)

Recitation of *Gurbani* is an important part of *simran*. We are enjoined upon to commit to memory the five *banis* recited when *amrit* is prepared, and *Rehras* and *Keertan Sohila*. These are to be recited during morning, evening and at night when going to bed. This is to ensure regularity and continuity of *simran* in all conditions. In initial stages, some times we get bored by reciting over and over again the same word or *bani*. But it affords a good opportunity to practise concentration and create will power to keep in control the mind which is so very fickle and wild. All the same, if we switch to reciting for a little while some other *bani* from the Scripture, it helps revive interest and brings the mind back from its wild wanderings. Achievements and experiences are gained only by personal effort. But this is not the final stage. The veil of ignorance and superstition is wrung aside only by the flash of Divine Love.

When one eats up the desires, spiritual discipline (ਸਿਧਿ) is attained and then enlightenment dawns.

ਅਚਰੁ ਚਰੈ ਤਾ ਸਿਧਿ ਹੋਈ ਸਿਧਿ ਤੇ ਬੁਧਿ ਪਾਈ ॥

When the arrow of love pierces the body doubt is removed.

ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੇ ਸਰ ਲਾਗੇ ਤਨ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਤਾ ਭੁਖੁ ਕਾਟਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥ (ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮ : ੪)

It is then that in the admiration and love of the Master, one forgets the self and 'I-am-ness' is effaced, as a result of which complete harmony is achieved with God. This stage is described as :

In the human soul abides God, the soul exists in God : this is realised through the Guru's teaching.

ਆਤਮ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਆਤਮੁ ਚੀਨਸਿ ਗੁਰ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ॥ (ਭੈਰਉ ਮ : ੧)

When "I" was there You were away; now that You are there my 'I-am-ness' has disappeared.

ਜਬ ਹਮ ਹੋਤੇ ਤਬ ਤੂ ਨਾਹੀ ਅਬ ਤੂਹੀ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

Winds blowing in the seas raise high waves, but they too are nothing but water.

ਅਨਲ ਅਗਮ ਜੈਸੇ ਲਹਰਿ ਮਇ ਓਦਧਿ ਜਲ ਕੇਵਲ ਜਲ ਮਾਂਹੀ ॥  
(ਸੋਰਠਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ)

Then one begins to say :

I am but nothing, O God, every thing belongs to You.  
ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੇਰਾ ॥

On one side You are the absolute Lord, while on the other  
You are the Related Immanent One. Between these two  
ends my Master is playing His plays.

ਈਐ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਊਐ ਸਰਗੁਨ ਕੇਲ ਕਰਤ ਬਿਚਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਮੇਰਾ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

You are within the body and also without, for, You pervade  
everywhere.

ਨਗਰ ਮਹਿ ਆਪਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਆਪਨ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋ ਸਗਲ ਬਸੇਰਾ ॥

You are the Ruler and also the Subject, at some places  
You are the Master while at other You are the Servant.

ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਰਾਜਨੁ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਰਾਇਆ ਕਹ ਕਹ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਕਹ ਕਹ ਚੇਰਾ ॥

From whom do we hide and whom do we cheat, for  
wherever I see, Your Presence gets near and near.

ਕਾ ਕਉ ਦੁਰਾਉ ਕਾਸਿਉ ਬਲਬੰਚਾ ਜਹ ਜਹ ਪੇਖਉ ਤਹ ਤਹ ਨੇਰਾ ॥

Nanak, since I have met the Guru-saint, I see no difference  
between the ocean and the drop.

ਸਾਧ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਭੇਟਿਓ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਾਗਰ ਬੂੰਦ ਨਹੀ ਅਨ ਹੇਰਾ ॥ (ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ: ੫)

Here one transcends the need to understand. One has only  
to accept and adore. The Satguru has offered a new approach,  
above the traditional paths of knowledge, work, devotion and  
renunciation. This is the path, the doctrine, of Name. This means  
creation of the mood of aesthetic ecstasy, which in other words  
means aesthetical insight leading man through appearances to  
reality. One gets intuitional understanding of the Divine Being.  
That is why Sikhs are sometimes referred to as mystics. When  
proceeding on this way we come across many distractions and we  
gain some such powers which are not understood by a common  
man and get wondrous flashes and experience other inexpressible  
visions. We should better be careful and not get attracted by and  
involved in them. The goal is beyond them which is the place of  
the Formless and Timeless God, about whom Satguru says :

The Lord is without form, feature, or hue, beyond the

world's senses.

ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖੁ ਨ ਰੰਗੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਿੰਨ ॥

He touches man's understanding through His Grace.

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਬੁਝਾਏ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੁਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ॥ (ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ)

A stage is achieved when, in the perceptible and imperceptible, the Light shines from only One Source. Then :

The Master alone speaks in every heart.

ਸਭੈ ਘਟ ਰਾਮੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਰਾਮਾ ਬੋਲੈ ॥

Who else but God speaks.

ਰਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੋਲੈ ਰੇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Of the same clay are moulded the elephant and the ant, and vessels of different shapes.

ਏਕਲ ਮਾਟੀ ਕੁੰਜਰ ਚੀਟੀ ਭਾਜਨ ਹੈਂ ਬਹੁ ਨਾਨਾ ਰੇ ॥

The Master is functioning in every thing, in plant life, animal life, crawling life and winged life.

ਅਸਥਾਵਰ ਜੰਗਮ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਮ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਨਾ ਰੇ ॥

(ਮਾਲੀ ਗਉੜੀ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ)

And :

Whatever, even the deer, the fish and the birds utter, I hear in them none else but my God.

ਜੋ ਬੋਲਤ ਹੈ ਮ੍ਰਿਗ ਮੀਨ ਪੰਥਿਰੂ ਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਾਪਤ ਹੈ ਨਹੀ ਹੋਰ ॥ (ਮਲਾਰ ਮ : ੪)

Previously we were proceeding from *asthul* to *sukham*, now at this stage we observe *asthul* in the *sukham* as well. All the notes and noises originate through the five elements in this world. It is the Supreme Master who strikes the notes :

Now that my Friends (Guru-conscious loved ones) have come into my home (mind), the five strains of Divine Music have begun to ring within me, unstruck.

ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦ ਧੁਨਿ ਅਨਹਦ ਵਾਜੇ ਹਮ ਘਰਿ ਸਾਜਨ ਆਏ ॥ (ਸੂਰੀ ਮ : ੧)

The vision of the immanent God is then observed and enjoyed through our senses :

This Universe that you perceive, is the manifest image of God; in it we have the vision of the Lord.

ਇਹੁ ਵਿਸੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਏਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਦਰੀ ਆਇਆ ॥ (ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ : ੩)

Beyond the circle of religions (*Vedas*, Semitic Texts, etc.),

and the whole world,

ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹਭਾ ਹੂੰ ਬਾਹਰਾ ॥

Nanak's Master is clearly seen manifest all over.

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਜਾਹਰਾ ॥ (ਆਸਾ ਮ : ੫)

God is thus delivered from the bonds of religions and is brought back to man. With the help and strength of the Guru, by and by, with *simran* we reach a stage when we forget our self completely. There our soul forgets even our body and enjoys the Bliss of the nearness to the Universal Soul. Ultimately, when we attain complete harmony, we reach the City of Bliss ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ which is described as :

“Without Sorrow” is the name of the Town,

ਬੇਗਮ ਪੁਰਾ ਸਹਰ ਕੇ ਨਾਉ ॥

where there is no suffering or anxiety.

ਦੁਖੁ ਅੰਦੋਹੁ ਨਹੀ ਤਿਹਿ ਠਾਉ ॥

Nor is there any harrassment of tax on goods.

ਨਾ ਤਸਵੀਸ ਖਿਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਮਾਲੁ ॥

Neither is any fear of mistake, nor dread of any slump.

ਖਉਫੁ ਨ ਖਤਾ ਨ ਤਰਸੁ ਜਵਾਲੁ ॥

I have now found my wonderful fatherland.

ਅਬ ਮੋਹਿ ਖੁਬ ਵਤਨ ਗਹ ਪਾਈ ॥

There it is eternal peace and bliss.

ਊਹਾ ਖੈਰਿ ਸਦਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

The Sovereign is everlasting and eternal.

ਕਾਇਮੁ ਦਾਇਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੀ ॥

There is no second or third rival but only one Master.

ਦੋਮ ਨ ਸੇਮ ਏਕ ਸੋ ਆਹੀ ॥

The population is ever famous, for there abide who are wealthy and content.

ਆਬਾਦਾਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਮਸਹੂਰ ॥ ਊਹਾ ਗਨੀ ਬਸਹਿ ਮਾਮੂਰ ॥

They are free to go about anywhere they like and enjoy.

ਤਿਉ ਤਿਉ ਸੈਲ ਕਰਹਿ ਜਿਉ ਭਾਵੈ ॥

They know the secrets of the Mansion and nobody checks them.

ਮਹਰਮ ਮਹਲ ਨ ਕੋ ਅਟਕਾਵੈ ॥

Says Ravidas the emancipated tanner;

ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਖਲਾਸ ਚਮਾਰਾ ॥

he who is my fellow citizen in this land, is my loved friend.

ਜੋ ਹਮ ਸਹਰੀ ਸੁ ਮੀਤੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥ (ਗਉੜੀ ਗੁਆਰੇਰੀ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀ)

Thus, we arrive at the Divine Door which is described as :

How beautiful Your Door; how lovely the Mansion where You sit to watch over all.

ਸੋ ਦਰੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੇਹਾ ਸੋ ਘਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਬਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥

How many minstrels are there with countless instruments of different kinds.

ਵਾਜੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਦ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਸੰਖਾ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

How many heavenly musicians who sing in various tunes and different measures.

ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਰਾਗ ਪਰੀ ਸਿਉ ਕਹੀਅਹਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਗਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

The elements of water, wind, and fire serenade at Your Door and there is the Lord of Justice singing to Your glory.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਪਵਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਰਾਜਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ ॥

To You sing Chit and Gupt, the scribes of heaven, on whose record the Lord of Dharam weighs the deeds of beings.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਚਿਤੁ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਲਿਖਿ ਜਾਣਨਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਧਰਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ॥

To You sing Siva, Brahma and the spouse of Vishnu, all beautified by Your kindness.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਈਸਰੁ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਦੇਵੀ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਸਦਾ ਸਵਾਰੇ ॥

At Your door sing Indras, seated on their thrones with the choirs of other gods and goddesses.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੁ ਇੰਦ੍ਰਾਸਣਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਦਰਿ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

The Siddhs, wrapt in meditation, and the seers in their discourses, sing to You.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਸਿਧ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਸਾਧ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ॥

The celibates, and men of Truth and Contentment and mighty warriors also sing to You.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਜਤੀ ਸਤੀ ਸੰਤੋਖੀ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਵੀਰ ਕਰਾਰੇ ॥

To You sing the great sages with the scriptures of different ages, and the Pandits who read them.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਪੜਨਿ ਰਖੀਸੁਰ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਵੇਦਾ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

To You also sing the beauties that enchant the hearts in heaven, on earth, and in the nether regions.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਮੋਹਣੀਆ ਮਨੁ ਮੋਹਨਿ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਮਛੁ ਪਇਆਲੇ ॥

Gems created by You along with the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage sing of You.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਰਤਨ ਉਪਾਏ ਤੇਰੇ ਅਠਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

Valiant warriors and the brave-hearts sing to You, and so do the four sources of life.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਜੋਧ ਮਹਾਬਲ ਸੂਰਾ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਖਾਣੀ ਚਾਰੇ ॥

To You sing earthly regions, heavenly spheres, and the whole Universe, created and sustained by You.

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡਾ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਰਖੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਧਾਰੇ ॥

But to You sing those who please You and who are steeped in the nectar of Your love.

ਸੇਈ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਜੋ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵਨਿ ਰਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਗਤ ਰਸਾਲੇ ॥

Many more also sing to You whom I cannot even visualise or recall.

ਹੋਰਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਸੇ ਮੈ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਨਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਿਆ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ॥  
(ਆਸਾ ਮ : ੨)

An outline of the daily routine of a Sikh is given by the fourth Guru :

He who is called a Sikh of the Guru, should rise early and remember the Lord's Name.

ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ, ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥

He should start the day early and take bath and have a dip in the Pool of Nectar.

ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ ॥

Through the Guru's teachings, he should dwell upon the Lord, so that all his sins are washed off.

ਉਪਦੇਸਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪੁ ਦੇਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ ॥

And when the sun rises, let him sing the Guru's word and reflect on God's Name while sitting and standing.

ਫਿਰਿ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ, ਬਹਦਿਆ ਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥

He who remembers my God with every breath and morsel, that Sikh becomes the Beloved of the Guru.

ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥

To whom my Lord becomes kind, the Guru gives instructions to that Sikh.

ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥

Nanak craves the Dust of that Sikh of the Guru who always remembers and makes others remember the Name.

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਧੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥  
(ਗਉੜੀ ਮ : ੪)

### Purpose

The purpose of *simran* is to never forget the presence of God. It creates a feeling of His Presence in us and our existence in Him. In *Baramaha, Rag Majh*, the fifth Satguru says, "When the flow of sap is stopped, the branch withers and the tree cannot bear fruit." ਜਲ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਾਖ ਕੁਮਲਾਵਤੀ ਉਪਜਹਿ ਨਾਰੀ ਦਾਮ । *Simran* keeps the sap flowing and the contact fresh with the fountain-head of Life. Thus, when both God and Guru have filled the individual, Godly virtues, powers, and vigour is generated. This presence of the Guru as the functioning force in the Sikh links him to an inexhaustible source of power and virility. *Simran* is, therefore, an exercise in experiencing the Presence of God. Through *Simran* we realise the Truth and get our minds attuned to the Will of the Ultimate Truth. This is impressed in *Jap* as follows :

O Satguru, make me understand one thing,

ਗੁਰਾ ਇਕ ਦੇਹਿ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥

that there is but one Benefactor of all creatures. May I never forget Him.

ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਸੋ ਮੈ ਵਿਸਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

*Simran* will lead to the realisation of His presence everywhere around and within us, and our being existing in His lap. When we get aware of His unfailing presence within us, we realise that we cannot hide even our inner thoughts from Him.

Nothing can be concealed from You, the Omnipresent, who watches everywhere.

ਅਗਹੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਪਿਛਹੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਕਹਾ ਛਪਾਵੈ ॥



Our actions, our thoughts, our feelings, our living will, by itself, become unblemished and we will be on the right track. *Simran* will take us nearer and nearer to the fountain-head of Life. Suffice it to say that this “nearness” and “presence” will generate saintly virtues and Godly values in us and make us God-conscious. The basic purpose of *simran* is that the human mind be controlled and trained to become attuned with the Divine Will so that whatever is brought about by the Almighty Creator is accepted not only without demur and complaining but with calm pleasure. Persistent, patient, continuation of remembering will create love. Remembrance and love, thus, become inseparable.

The *Sawaiya* of bard Balh gives a moving detail thus :

Satguru, contemplating and remembering Whom the vision is cleared of darkness.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਿਮਰੰਤ ਨਯਨ ਕੇ ਤਿਮਰ ਮਿਟਹਿ ਖਿਨੁ ॥

By dwelling on Satguru the Lord's Name comes to dwell in our minds every moment.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਿਮਰੰਥਿ ਰਿਦੈ ਹਰਿਨਾਮੁ ਦਿਨੈ ਦਿਨੁ ॥

It is Satguru by remembering whom the fire burning in the heart is quenched.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਿਮਰੰਥਿ ਜੀਅ ਕੀ ਤਪਤ ਮਿਟਾਵੈ ॥

By dwelling on the Satguru one is blessed with miraculous powers and all the treasures.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਿਮਰੰਥਿ ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਨਵ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

Balh says, that is Guru Ram Das and associate with his *sangat* and praise Him in gratefulness.

ਸੋਈ ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਲੁ ਭਣਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਧੰਨਿ ਧੰਨਿ ਕਰਹੁ ॥

By following the Satguru, one realises the Supreme Being, O man ! Ever remember and contemplate the Satguru.

ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਲਗਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਸੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਨਰਹੁ ॥੫॥੫੪॥

This is the reason we get the instruction of the Guru.

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਟੋਕ ਰਹਹੁ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤਿ ॥

*The Guru*

Along with *simran* of Akal Purkh in the Scripture *Gurbani*

impresses upon us *simran*, and *Jap* of the Guru as well. To go to an unknown place it is necessary to have instructions from a guide who knows the place thoroughly and can point out correctly the obstructions, pitfalls and difficulties and other troubles that we may have to face on the way. Such a guide is the Guru who, in his heart of hearts, belongs to that very place. He will not only tell us which way to go and which difficulties and obstructions we will have to face, but also the ascent being very slippery and difficult, he will take us by the hand and lead us to the goal. The importance and significance of the Guru being next to God has been discussed in detail elsewhere. Without the Guru it is pitch dark and nothing can be perceived (ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਘੋਰੁ ਅੰਧਾਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਮਝ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥ ਸਵੱਯੋ ਮ : ੪ ਕੇ). To attain the goal, therefore, we have first to create in us devotion, faith, and love for the Guru and surrender our intelligence, thoughts, mind and body to the Guru (ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਉਪਿ ਗੁਰ ਕਉ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਾਈਐ). That is why Bhai Nand Lal says :

Remember Him, remember Him, always remember His remembrance.

ਯਾਦਿ ਉਕੁਨ, ਯਾਦਿ ਉ ਗੋਯਾ ਮੁਦਾਮ ।

It is the Guru who lifts the veil of ignorance and shows the light. It is the Guru who reveals the mysteries of the Unknown and Unseeable. In *Rag Gaund*, the fifth Guru says :

The Creator is known through the Guru.

ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਸੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥

Then again we come across such command :

I am sacrifice to that mediator friend, by meeting whom the Master is known.

ਘੋਲਿ ਘੁਮਾਈ ਤਿਸ ਮਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਵਿਚੋਲੇ ਜੈ ਮਿਲਿ ਕੰਤੁ ਪਛਾਣਾ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ : ੫)

And further :

O my mind, recite only the Guru's Name.

ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਨ ਮੋਰ ॥

for me there is no one else but the Guru.

ਗੁਰੁ ਬਿਨਾ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਹੋਰ ॥

In the above quotation the words — “Guru Gur” — need to be clearly understood. They mean the Guru of the Gurus, i.e., God. So here the order is to meditate on the Guru and also Guru's

Guru. So the Guru functions like a small starting engine. We had some big T.D. Fourteen tractors and even a bigger tractor many years ago. These machines had a small engine on top of them. This engine was first started and then it was put in gear to start the bigger engine. These bigger machines were too big to be started by any other means. So the Guru works and functions to switch us on to the Guru God. The first step, therefore, is to grasp the Guru's Lotus Feet and absorb the Guru's wisdom. So much so that we become and function only as instruments under the command of the Guru Master. In *Rag Jait Sri* the fourth Nanak says :

The jewel of the Lord's Name is enshrined in my heart,  
as the Guru has placed his hand of Blessing Grace on my forehead.

ਮੇਰੇ ਹੀਅਰੈ ਰਤਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਰਿ ਬਸਿਆ ਗੁਰਿ ਹਾਥੁ ਧਰਿਓ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਾਥਾ ॥

Sins and sorrows, gathered birth after birth, have all been washed away; the Guru having blessed me with the Name, all my accounts have been settled.

ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਕੇ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਦੁਖ ਉਤਰੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੀਓ ਰਿਨੁ ਲਾਥਾ ॥

The fifth Nanak says in *Rag Parbhati* :

Meditating on the Lord's Name, one is rid of all the sins.  
ਸਿਮਰਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਸਭਿ ਕਾਟੇ ॥

The records of our deeds with the *Dharmraj* are all torn away.

ਧਰਮ ਰਾਇ ਕੇ ਕਾਗਰ ਫਾਟੇ ॥

A Sikh is thus linked up with an inexhaustible source of power. A change then takes place not only in physical fitness but also in his mental and spiritual outlook. He will become and work as a garrison of the Lord of Hosts, a host in himself.

The Guru being one with God, our life line with the Fountain-head of Life will thus be energised.

### *Mind*

The hardest nut to crack is to control the mind and mould it to an attitude to become attuned to the Will of the Universal Mind. About the mind being defiant, restless and unstable, the Satguru says :

O mother ! my mind is not in my control.

ਮਾਈ ਮਨੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਸਿ ਨਾਹਿ ॥

Night and day it hankers after vice; I know not how to stop it.

ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਬਿਖਿਅਨ ਕਉ ਧਾਵਤ, ਕਿਹਿ ਬਿਧਿ ਰੋਕਉ ਤਾਹਿ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

It listens to different scriptures but cares not about their teachings even for a moment.

ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਕੇ ਮਤ ਸੁਨਿ, ਨਿਮਖ ਨ ਹੀਏ ਬਸਾਵੈ ॥

Lured by another's riches and woman, wastes the life in vain.

ਪਰਧਨ ਪਰਦਾਰਾ ਸਿਉ ਰਚਿਓ, ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਿਰਾਵੈ ॥ (ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮ : ੯)

The mind may be a hard nut but there can be no advancement in *simran* (ਨਾਮ ਅਭਿਆਸ) without cracking, and training it. It is only when we are able to conquer the mind that we conquer the world (ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ). The human mind is like a spark from the Universal Soul. It is essential, therefore, to understand this reality. The Guru says :

O mind ! you are the embodiment of Light, better appreciate your origin.

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ (ਆਸਾ ਮ : ੩)

The human mind is like a double-edged sword. It cuts both ways. It can lead us to deliverance and can also drag us to hell. So when the reality has dawned, the mind will work as a driving force and take us to the desired end. Satguru explains in the following words :

The mind is like a ruler, it is pacified when it is satisfied through the grace of the Guru. Its cravings are then stilled.

ਮਨੁ ਰਾਜਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਮਾਨਿਆ ਮਨਸਾ ਮਨਹਿ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

The mind, united with God, when separated, is wasted away. When understanding dawns it sings the praises of the Lord.

ਮਨੁ ਜੋਗੀ ਮਨੁ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਬਿਓਰੀ ਮਨੁ ਸਮਝੈ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਈ ॥

Rare persons mould the mind with the *Shabd* and control the mind with the grace of the Guru.

ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਿਆ ਤੇ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥

Nanak : The Master is All-prevailing; emancipation truly

comes through the *Shabd*.

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਭਰਿਪੁਰਿ ਲੀਣਾ ਸਾਚ ਸਬਦਿ ਨਿਸਤਾਰਾ ॥ (ਭੈਰਉ ਮ : ੧)

The human mind becomes blurred because of hopes and fears, desires and attachments, etc. This dirt has got to be cleaned to make the mind crystal clear (ਨਿਰਮਲ ਮਨ). As a consequence, our intelligence will also become capable of discriminating between good and bad (ਬਿਬੇਕ ਬੁਧਿ). It is only the understanding of the *Shabd* and its interpretation in our actions which can do this cleansing.

The human mind works in two ways. Firstly, it functions through our physical organs and senses. Secondly, it works by itself, direct and straight, without any help of our organs. In the second way, it functions by becoming one with things. As for instance when we get annoyed we straight away get enraged. Similarly, the mind functions during love, lust, and passion. But we remain aware and in knowledge of being in that state, as we become one with wrath, love, lust, or passion and so on. In the same way, we are aware of our origin and have the knowledge of our being, though the experience of Reality follows only if we get into complete harmony and become one with It. We miss the harmony and the feeling of one-ness, because we work under the impression of being separate and independent from others — the Creator and other beings. Mind is in the habit of working independent of our physical organs and senses as in hypnotism, in dreams, and under other subconscious conditions. So if we link our mind with something and become one with it, we can realise its identity and origin and can appreciate its intentions without the help of our organs. In the same way, if we can lift our mind above human failings and attachments, and link it with the Supreme Being, we can get the Divine vision and experience spiritual one-ness. It is the Supermind who can lead and take us to this state. And this Supermind is the Guru.

Mind can be stabilized but with some centre. This centre is not to be static or dead as stone. But to direct the mind and put it under discipline in due course leads to its centre. We have to search for this centre with the help and light of intelligence. The void, the longing, the urge, and unsatisfied desires and incompleteness in us

are indications that every thing is not a myth but there is some Central Reality. In lack of perfection, there is lurking desire to attain perfection without feeling any frustration. This longing and urge, in spite of awareness of being transitory, points towards some thing which is real, and this Reality is the centre around which the mind is made by Nature to revolve. Within this centre is the Ultimate Reality. We have first to link with the perceptible Reality, the functioning Immanent Force and then switch on to the imperceptible Central Reality. We can understand it with intelligence, but we attain the goal only by actually proceeding towards it. Bhai Gurdas has said :

Enquiring about the way but not taking a step to proceed  
will not take us to the domain of the Beloved.

ਪੂਛਤ ਪਥਕਿ ਤਿਹ ਮਾਰਗ ਨ ਧਾਰੈ ਪ੍ਰਗ  
ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਕੇ ਦੇਸ ਕੈਸੇ ਬਾਤਨ ਸਿਉ ਜਾਈਐ ।

Even about *kirtan* which is the sole way of worship in Sikhism it is said :

By singing and listening with closed eyes, deliverance is  
not attained unless Guru's instructions are imbibed and  
lived upon.

ਗਾਏ ਸੁਨੈ ਆਖੈ ਮੀਚੈ ਪਾਈਐ ਨ ਪਰਮ ਪਦੁ  
ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਗਹਿ ਜਉ ਲਉ ਨ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥

The fourth Satguru in *Rag Asa* says :

Some people sing His praises by singing, some through  
instruments like a conch and some by reciting scriptures  
and other ways but the Providence is not pleased or  
appeased by such acts.

ਕੋਈ ਗਾਵੈ ਰਾਗੀ ਨਾਦੀ ਬੇਦੀ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਤਿ ਕਰਿ  
ਨਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਭੀਜੈ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਜੇ ॥

For those, who had deceit and vice in the mind, their  
bemoaning is in vain.

ਜਿਨਾ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਪਟੁ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਤਿਨਾ ਰੋਇ ਕਿਆ ਕੀਜੈ ॥

God the Creator knows every thing howsoever we may  
hide our vices.

ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਸਿਰਿ ਰੋਗ ਹਥੁ ਦੀਜੈ ॥

Those who have clear conscience will achieve harmony

through His *simran*.

ਜਿਨਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਸੁਪੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਲੀਜੈ ॥

### Word

Some people who labour under the influence of Hinduism are very fussy about a particular word being used while repeating the Name in *simran*. This is like propitiating a particular god with a particular sanskrit *mantra* with a set of specified observations and rituals to be performed correct in the minutest detail; or like offering *Nimaz* while reciting *Ayats* in Arabic, both Arabic and Sanskrit being understood by only a select few. The question of the attitude of mind, which is the mainstay of Sikhism is absent everywhere. The Satguru has, therefore, attached no sanctity to any particular word being used. The word which is best understood by the recitor and which has a tradition and association connected with it to help in concentration and focussing the mind, should be taken up for *simran*. It may be Ram, Rahim, Parmatma, Ishwar, Waheguru, Akalpurkh, Satnam, Allah, God, Rabb, Almighty Lord, Gobind, Gopal or any other word indicating the Supreme Being. Amongst the Sikhs nowadays, 'Waheguru' is generally used, because for us, behind this word lies tradition, history, and philosophy. But it is not necessary that it may have the same association and hallowed sanctity for all people in all lands of the earth. In *Gurbani* we find innumerable words for God being freely used. There is a full *Shabd* of considerable length in *Rag Maru* by the fifth Guru, in which almost all the words prevalent at that time, irrespective of any school of thought or religion, are used for the Godhead without any distinction. This *Shabd* is generally known as *Sahansar Nama* which means "millions of Names." The whole of the *Jaap* by the tenth Guru having 199 *Chhands* contains only the different names of God with different adjectives attached to them. On the first page of *Guru Granth Sahib* just after the *Mool Mantra*, in which the Satguru's conception of God is summed up, there is the order 'Jap' followed by the *shlok* :

True One was in the beginning, before all ages began;  
the True One exists even now and shall ever be.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

*Jap* means repeat, recite, and meditate. But nowhere, either before or after, is there any such word used as *Waheguru*. In fact, this is the least used word in the Scripture. Mostly *Wah* is used in praise and admiration of the Guru — ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿ ਜੀਓ or sometimes it is used for God himself. Presumably '*Waheguru*' was brought into vogue by Bhai Gurdas during the fifth and sixth Satgurus' period and it gained ascendancy during the period of the tenth Guru when the Sikhs accosted each other saying :

*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh.*

In the Scripture we find different names used for God with instructions to repeat (ਜਪੁ) in *simran*, such as :

O my mind, recite and dwell always and continuously on God who is the Truth. (Satnam)

ਜਪਿ ਮਨ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ॥ (ਰਾਗ ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮ : ੪)

Recite and dwell ever on the Immanent God (Ram)

ਰਮ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਜਾਪ ॥

so that the afflictions of greed, attachment and ego are rid.

ਕਲਿ ਕਲੇਸ ਲੋਭ ਮੋਹ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਜਾਇ ਅਹੰਤਾਪ ॥ (ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਮ : ੫)

And

Dwell upon the Lovable Sustainer of the Universe (Govind, Gopal, Lal).

ਜਪਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦੁ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਲਾਲੁ ॥ (ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ : ੫)

O my mind, dwell upon the Immanent God who sustains the earth (Ram Gopal)

ਮਨ ਜਾਪਹੁ ਰਾਮ ਗੁਪਾਲ ॥ (ਕਾਨੜਾ ਮ : ੪)

I have become undoubtedly blessed by dwelling upon the Supreme Being. (Har or Hari)

ਹਉ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿ ਭਈ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥ (ਕਾਨੜਾ ਮ : ੪)

O mind, dwell on the Lord of the earth and of *maya*; (Gobind Madho)

ਜਪਿ ਮਨ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਾਧੋ ॥

The Supreme Being who is Unfathomable and Infinite (Hari)

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਅਗਮ ਅਗਾਧੋ ॥ (ਕਾਨੜਾ ਮ : ੪)



*Time and Place*

No time and place are particularly specified for *simran*. Whenever the mind can be brought into proper mood and concentration, and taken away from worldly worries and responsibilities, it is the best and most appropriate time and place for *simran*. Some people try to be 'spiritual mystics' and say that the doors for the Divine audience open at 2.30 a.m. and one must be ready to enter at that moment, as if at other times of the day and night they remain closed and shut. Evidently they display their ignorance of the Satguru's teachings and the Sikh tenets. *Simran* can be done at any time of the day or night. Generally, people are free from their worldly duties and anxieties at night. During the second half of the night, the pressure of sleep also diminishes and Nature is calm, the air is clean, purified, and light, and the body is also relaxed. If the mind is applied to *simran* at that time it can be focussed with comparative ease (I have found that some times while going in an automobile the mind gets concentrated pretty quickly as there is nothing else to do except to observe the Wonderful Master functioning in His beauteous Creation and at play in His Nature, provided, of course, the person at the wheel is known to be dependable !). If this is done after an early morning bath, it is still better. Sikhism does not believe in dogmas and stunts. There is no sanctity attached to any particular time or date or period. The Satguru clearly says that :

All the months and days and periods are good if the Master looks with favour,

ਮਾਹ ਦਿਵਸ ਮੂਰਤ ਭਲੇ ਜਿਸ ਕਉ ਨਦਰ ਕਰੇ ॥

and all the places are sacred where the *Shabd* Guru repairs.

ਜਿਥੈ ਜਾਇ ਬਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਸੋ ਥਾਨੁ ਸੁਹਾਵਾ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਜੇ ॥

Blessed is the hour, the second, the moment,

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਘੜੀ ਧੰਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਮੂਰਤੁ ਪਲੁਸਾਰੁ ॥

Blessed is the day, the auspicious opportunity, when I see the Guru's vision.

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਸੰਜੋਗੜਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਡਿਠਾ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਸਾਰੁ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ: ੫)

## DEMOCRACY, JOINT LEADERSHIP AND JOINT RESPONSIBILITY

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From the very beginning Satguru laid a very deep and sound foundation of democracy in the *Panth*. As the first instance, we find that when Guru Nanak Dev left this world, he left no instructions as to how the pyre was to be disposed off. It was left to his disciples to decide. Consequently, what was left was divided between the contending parties.

Then, during the fifth Guru's time when an offer of the daughter of Chandu Shah for marriage with Guru Hargobind was received, the *sangat* of Delhi sent word that the offer was not worth considering. It was thereupon politely refused. This created bitterness and Chandu Shah became one of the main instigators of Emperor Jahangir's ire against the Sikhs. The spirit of democracy was, thus, upheld.

When the time for the eighth Nanak came to delegate Guruship, though he gave a clear enough indication, he left the selection of his successor to the Sikhs. This, they successfully did, under the guidance of Makhan Shah, a trader in Kathiawar, and announced the Guruship of Guru Teg Bahadur.

The tenth Satguru, finally established this way of democracy in the *Panth* when in 1699, he administered *amrit* to the five Beloved Ones and then requested them to administer *amrit* in the same way to him as he had done. Thus, when passing on the Guruship to the Khalsa under the Supreme Sovereignty of the *Gurshabd*, the *Gurbani* incorporated in the Holy Granth, he established thereby, some other very important principles too. The first is that there is no possibility for any personality cult amongst the Sikhs after the

tenth Satguru. Secondly, it was laid down that henceforth the system of joint leadership and joint responsibility in a democratic set-up will be followed. Whenever we tilt towards authoritarian dictatorship, we get off the track and head towards our downfall.

History tells us that the tenth Satguru implemented and brought these principles into actual practice himself. When Anandpur Sahib was evacuated in the winter of 1704, the Satguru in several ways told the Sikhs that this step was not well advised. Those who did not listen to his advice, were asked to give it in writing and 40 of them even signed a sort of 'disclaimer.' Though at that time, they deserted the ranks and went away, yet on being reprimanded and shamed by their own women and families and friends in the *Majha Ilaka*, they returned under the leadership of Mai Bhago, deeply repentant and offered their lives for the Satguru at Muktsar. Finally, during the siege of Anandpur when the majority persisted with its demand, the Guru agreed to evacuate the fort. What tragedies happened afterwards, how the Guru's two elder sons lost their lives fighting valiantly at Chamkaur alongside a large number of other Sikhs, and how two of his younger sons were bricked alive and martyred at Sirhind and the Guru's mother lost her life, are historical facts known to us all. But the Guru never complained that in spite of his advice, they had taken a wrong decision. Similarly, the escape from Chamkaur Sahib was in compliance with the decision and orders of the Khalsa. The Satguru's own intention was to fight there to the end. The Sikhs in the fortress of Chamkaur decided that if the Satguru is saved the *Panth* would be saved too; otherwise, both will be imperilled.

## THE SIKH SWORD

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The Sikh sword is the symbol of a Sikh's *dharam* to resist aggression, tyranny and injustice. It is a symbol of self-reliance, self-confidence, self-help, and self-protection. It is meant to destroy evil and evil-doers, root and branch. It is to sweep aside obstacles that obstruct the performance of his *dharam*, duty, and way of life, to uphold what is good, and punish who is bad and a bane for humanity. The tenth Nanak says :

Thou bestowest happiness on the good, Thou terrifiest the evil-doers, Thou scatterest sinners; I seek Thy protection, O Sword.

ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਹ ਕਰਣੈ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣੈ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਹਰਣੈ ਅਸਿ ਸਰਣੈ ।

Kabir in *Rag Ramkali* says :

I accept only the good and punish the evil-doers; this is how, I discharge the duties of the keepers of God's peace.

ਸੰਤਾ ਮਾਨਉ ਦੂਤਾ ਡਾਨਉ ਇਹ ਕੁਟਵਾਰੀ ਮੇਰੀ ॥

The very sight of the sword with the Sikhs has caused jitters in certain minds and quarters. The flash of the sword has dazzled their visions. But it is a temporary blindness which can be cured if reality is understood. The Sikh sword is not meant to be brandish right and left to be struck at whosoever comes in its way. The Sikh sword is, in fact, like a surgeon's lancet meant to remove soiled parts and amputate gangrenous organs. It is a symbol of will and power and determination of a Sikh to live a Sikh life.

The Sikh sword is not meant to be a butcher's knife and neither to be a mere showpiece. It has got to be wielded and effectively used when needed. The tenth Satguru in *Zafarnama*

has very clearly and definitely laid down :

When all other remedies have failed;

ਚੂੰ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਾ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸਤ ।

It is justified to have recourse to the Sword.

ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ ।

So it has got to be judiciously used, and only when all other means of persuasion, diplomacy, reasoning, etc., have failed. The Sikhs have recently again given a practical proof of this judiciousness in the spring of 1966, when their religion and religious places were attacked by the fanatic anti-Punjabi Suba demonstrators. The bigotted communalist elements among the Hindus forgot the sacrifice and martyrdom of their saviour, Guru Teg Bahadur, and threw stones at his memorial gurdwara, Sis-Ganj, in Delhi. The shining steel hanging by their sides ready at hand was not even once touched and flashed. History tells us that the tenth Guru fought only when first attacked. All the battles were fought in self-defence or to help in a deserving cause. In *Bachittar Natak*, about the attack of the Hill Rajas, he says :

He attacked me without any cause

ਲੋਹ ਪੜਾ ਹਮ ਸੋ ਬਿਨ ਕਾਜਾ ।

Sword is an allegorical reference to force. For a Sikh, therefore, legitimate use of force in defence of human values is not only right but becomes incumbent when an occasion arises, because he refuses to submit to brute force. When the sword is brought to bear, it must be effective and decisive. The tenth Master has invoked the sword in these words :

Thou art the subduer of countries, the destroyer of the armies of the wicked, in the battlefield thou greatly adornest the brave.

ਖਗ ਖੰਡ ਬਿਹੰਡ ਖਲ ਦਲ ਖੰਡ ਅਤਿ ਰਣ ਖੰਡ ਬਰਬੰਡ ।

Thine arm is infrangible, thy brightness refulgent, thy radiance and splendour dazzle like the sun.

ਭੁਜ ਦੰਡ ਅਖੰਡ ਤੇਜ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡ ਜੋਤ ਅਮੰਡ ਭਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਭ ।

Thou bestowest happiness on the good, thou terrifiest the evil, thou scatterest sinners; I seek thy protection.

ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਹ ਕਰਣੈ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣੈ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਹਰਣੈ ਅਸਿ ਸਰਣੈ ।

Hail ! Hail to the Creator of the world, the Saviour of  
creation, My cherisher, Hail to thee, O sword !

ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜਗ ਕਾਰਣ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਬਾਰਣ ਮਮ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਪਾਰਣ ਜੈ ਤੇਰੀ ।

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## WORSHIP — SINGING THE LORD'S PRAISES

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Whereas the whole structure of Sikhism is based on the conception of the Formless Being (ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ) the Sikh worship is also formless and, therefore, *kirtan*, is the sole form of worship. In *Rag Parbhati*, the fifth Satguru has dealt with this subject in detail. After discussing various forms and ways of worship of God he has concluded that the singing of the Lord's praises is the highest and the best :

Within One's mind, is wrath and immense sense of ego.

ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਮਹਾ ਅਹੰਕਾਰਾ ॥

And yet one worships God elaborately with all the rituals.

ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਬਿਸਥਾਰਾ ॥

And paints on the body *chakras* after bath.

ਕਰਿ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਤਨਿ ਚਕ੍ਰ ਬਣਾਏ ॥

But remains unclean from within.

ਅੰਤਰ ਕੀ ਮਲੁ ਕਥ ਹੀ ਨ ਜਾਏ ॥

No one has attained God through such "disciplines."

ਇਤੁ ਸੰਜਮਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਕਿਨ ਹੀ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

Vaishnav paints on the body are of no avail, if the mind is lured by *maya*.

ਭਗਉਤੀ ਮੁਦ੍ਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਮੋਹਿਆ ਮਾਇਆ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

One commits sins swayed by the five evils;

ਪਾਪ ਕਰਹਿ ਪੰਚਾ ਕੇ ਬਸਿ ਰੇ ॥

but considers them to be washed away by baths at pilgrim places.

ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਇ ਕਹਹਿ ਸਭਿ ਉਤਰੇ ॥

Thereafter one commits more sins with freedom.

ਬਹੁਰਿ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਸੰਕ ॥

One is thus carried away bound up by the angel of death.

ਜਮਪੁਰਿ ਬਾਧਿ ਖਰੇ ਕਾਲੰਕ ॥

Tying ankle bells one dances in worship accompanied by the beating of cymbals.

ਯੂਘਰ ਬਾਧਿ ਬਜਾਵਹਿ ਤਾਲਾ ॥

Within being deceitful, he walks out of rhythm.

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਪਟੁ ਫਿਰਹਿ ਬੋਤਾਲਾ ॥

By beating the hole, the snake is not killed.

ਵਰਮੀ ਮਾਰੀ ਸਾਪੁ ਨ ਮੂਆ ॥

God who created you knows every thing.

ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਾਨੈ ਜਿਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਕੀਆ ॥

One puts on ochre robes, and warms up by the smouldering fire.

ਪ੍ਰੀਅਰ ਤਾਪ ਗੇਰੀ ਕੇ ਬਸਤ੍ਰਾ ॥

Sung by worries, one abandons the household.

ਅਪਦਾ ਕਾ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਤੇ ਨਸਤਾ ॥

Leaving the homeland, one wanders from place to place,

ਦੇਸੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਪਰਦੇਸਹਿ ਧਾਇਆ ॥

But brings home the five *chandals* with him.

ਪੰਚ ਚੰਡਾਲ ਨਾਲੇ ਲੈ ਆਇਆ ॥

One's ears are torn and is begging for crumbs.

ਕਾਨ ਫਰਾਇ ਹਿਰਾਏ ਟੂਕਾ ॥

Asks for alms from door to door but is not satisfied.

ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮਾਰੈ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਾਵਨ ਤੇ ਚੂਕਾ ॥

One abandons his own woman and casts evil eye upon another's.

ਬਨਿਤਾ ਛੋਡਿ ਬਦਨਦਰਿ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ॥

God is not attained by putting on mendicants' garb and suffering tortures.

ਵੇਸਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਮਹਾ ਦੁਖਿਅਾਰੀ ॥

Under a vow of silence one keeps mum.

ਬੋਲੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਹੋਇ ਬੈਠਾ ਮੋਨੀ ॥

Within are desires, so one is ever on the round.

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਲਪ ਭਵਾਈਐ ਜੋਨੀ ॥

One gives up food and gives pain to the body.



ਅੰਨ ਤੇ ਰਹਤਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਦੇਹੀ ਸਹਤਾ ॥

For one does not realise the Will of God being afflicted by attachment.

ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਬੂਝੈ ਵਿਆਪਿਆ ਮਮਤਾ ॥

Without the True Guru, no one attains the Sublime State;  
ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਈ ਪਰਮ ਗਤੈ ॥

You may consult all the scriptures.

ਪ੍ਰਫੁਹੁ ਸਗਲ ਬੇਦ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੇ ॥

The self-centred does deeds which are of no use.

ਮਨਮੁਖ ਕਰਮ ਕਰੈ ਅਜਾਈ ॥

Like a house of sand that cannot stand.

ਜਿਉ ਬਾਲੂ ਘਰ ਠਉਰ ਨ ਠਾਈ ॥ (ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਮ : ੫)

And again in *Rag Sorath* :

I read the holy texts and dwelt on the Vedas, and controlled my breath and cleansed my inner system,  
ਪਾਠੁ ਪੜਿਓ ਅਰੁ ਬੇਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿਓ ਨਿਵਲਿ ਭੂਅੰਗਮ ਸਾਧੇ ॥

But I abandoned not the society of five (desires) and was bound to egohood more and more.

ਪੰਚ ਜਨਾ ਸਿਉ ਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ ਅਧਿਕ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਬਾਧੇ ॥੧॥

O dear ! These are not the ways to meet God, we may try any number of them.

ਪਿਆਰੇ ਇਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਮਿਲਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਮੈ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਮ ਅਨੇਕਾ ॥

So, prostrate at the Master's Door and pray

“O God, bless me with a discriminating intellect” (Pause)

ਹਾਰਿ ਪਰਿਓ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਕੈ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਦੀਜੈ ਬੁਧਿ ਬਿਬੇਕਾ ॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

I abided in silence and made of my hands a bowl, and wandered naked through the woods.

ਮੋਨਿ ਭਇਓ ਕਰਪਾਤੀ ਰਹਿਓ ਨਗਨ ਫਿਰਿਓ ਬਨ ਮਾਹੀ ॥

And I visited all the pilgrim places and river banks; Yes, the whole earth; but the sense of duality stuck on.

ਤਟ ਤੀਰਥ ਸਭ ਧਰਤੀ ਭ੍ਰਮਿਓ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਛੁਟਕੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

My mind's cravings led me to abide at the holy places; Yes, I chose to be sawn alive.

ਮਨ ਕਾਮਨਾ ਤੀਰਥ ਜਾਇ ਬਸਿਓ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਵਤ ਧਰਾਏ ॥

But my mind's scum was not cleansed thus, howsoever I tried.

ਮਨ ਕੀ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਉਤਰੈ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਜੇ ਲਖ ਜਤਨ ਕਰਾਏ ॥

I gifted away gold, woman, and horses and elephants to be acclaimed a man of charity.

ਕਨਿਕ ਕਾਮਿਨੀ ਹੈਵਰ ਗੈਵਰ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਦਾਨੁ ਦਾਤਾਰਾ ॥

Yes, I offered in alms food, clothes, and land but did not get to the Lord's Door.

ਅੰਨ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ ਭੂਮਿ ਬਹੁ ਅਰਪੇ ਨਹ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਹਰਿ ਦੁਆਰਾ ॥

I performed worship, and made flower-offerings (to the gods) Yea, I prostrated like a log and performed six kinds of actions.

ਪੂਜਾ ਅਰਚਾ ਬੰਦਨ ਡੰਡਉਤ ਖਟੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਰਤੁ ਰਹਤਾ ॥

But I was tied to myself and attained not to my God this way too.

ਹਉ ਹਉ ਕਰਤ ਬੰਧਨ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿਆ ਨਹ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਇਹ ਜੁਗਤਾ ॥

I practised Yoga, like a Siddha, and all the eighty four postures,

ਜੋਗ ਸਿਧ ਆਸਣ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਏ ਭੀ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ॥

and achieved longevity, but met not the Lord and kept on taking birth over and over again.

ਵਡੀ ਆਰਜਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਜਨਮੈ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਗਹਿਆ ॥

I ruled over lands and indulged in regal pleasures, and swelled by ego, I issued commands.

ਰਾਜ ਲੀਲਾ ਰਾਜਨ ਕੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਰਿਆ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਫਾਰਾ ॥

Slept on luxurious beds perfumed with *chandan*, but fell into hell in the end.

ਸੇਜ ਸੋਹਨੀ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਚੋਆ ਨਰਕ ਘੋਰ ਕਾ ਦੁਆਰਾ ॥

The highest deed is the singing of the Lord's praises and in the company of the *Sadh Sangat*.

ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਹੈ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਮਨ ਕੈ ਕਰਮਾ ॥

Sayeth Nanak; he alone attains to it in whose lot it is so writ by God.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਇਓ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਪੁਰਬ ਲਿਖੇ ਕਾ ਲਹਨਾ ॥੮॥

Thy Servant, O Lord ! is imbued thus with the Love, ਤੇਰੇ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਇਹ ਰੰਗਿ ਮਾਤਾ ॥

And Thou art kind to him, and he grieves no more, inebriated with Thy praise.

ਭਇਓ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲੁ ਦੀਨ ਦੁਖ ਭੰਜਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨਿ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਰਾਤਾ ॥  
ਰਹਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ॥

To this day, the *maryada* at the Golden Temple at Amritsar is that constant and continuous *kirtan*, divine and sublime, is carried on day and night by relays of *kirtan jathas* employed for this purpose, except for a couple of hours at midnight that are required for cleaning and washing the Temple. Then those who do the cleaning keep on singing *Shabd*. The same *maryada* has now been introduced in Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib at Delhi.

During the tenth Satguru's time, the development of Sikh music was exceptional, as is evident from his compositions in the *Dasam Granth*. There are nine different styles of poetry, *chhands*, totaling 73 compositions in the *Dasam Granth* that deal directly with music and are called *Sangeet Chhands*. Two are cited below. It is impossible to translate their rhythm and beat. This could be appreciated only by one who is conversant with playing on the *mridang* (a type of percussion instrument). These are, therefore, given in their original form :

ਕਾਗੜ ਦੀ ਕੁਪਯੋ ਕਪਿ ਕਟਕ, ਬਾਗੜ ਦੀ ਬਾਜਨ ਰਣ ਬੱਜੀਯ ।  
ਤਾਗੜ ਦੀ ਤੇਗ ਝਲਹਲੀ, ਗਾਗੜ ਦੀ ਜੋਧਾ ਗਲ ਗੱਜੀਯ ।  
ਸਾਗੜ ਦੀ ਸੂਰ ਸੰਮੁਹੇ, ਨਾਗੜ ਦੀ ਨਾਰਦ ਮੁਨਿ ਨੱਚਯੋ ।  
ਬਾਗੜ ਦੀ ਬੀਰ ਬੈਤਾਲ, ਆਗੜ ਦੀ ਆਰਣ ਰੰਗ ਰੱਚਯੋ ।  
ਸੰਸਾਗੜ ਦੀ ਸੁਭਟ ਨੱਚੇ ਸਮਰ, ਫਾਗੜਦੀ ਫੁੰਕ ਫਣੀਅਰ ਕਰੈਂ ।  
ਸੰਸਾਗੜ ਦੀ ਸਮਟੈ ਸੁੰਕੜੇ ਫਣਿਪਤਿ ਫਣਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਧਰੈਂ ।  
ਭੁਜੰਗ ਪ੍ਰਯਾਤ ।  
ਆਗੜ ਦੰਗ ਏਕੰ ਦਾਗੜ ਦੰਗ ਦਾਨੇ ।  
ਚਾਗੜ ਦੰਗ ਚੀਰਾ ਦਾਗੜ ਦੰਗ ਦੁਰਾਨੇ ।  
ਦਾਗੜ ਦੰਗ ਦੇਖੀ ਬਾਗੜ ਦੰਗ ਬੂਟੀ ।  
ਆਗੜ ਦੰਗ ਹੈ ਏਕ ਤੇ ਏਕ ਜੂਟੀ ।੫੮੩।

The fifth Satguru has even prayed himself in *Var Gujri* for :

In my mind, I cherish a keen desire that I may get up and make effort every day;

ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਿਤਵਓ ਚਿਤਵਨੀ ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰਉ ਉਠਿ ਨੀਤ ॥

O, Nanak's friend bless me so that I may remain engaged in singing the Lord's praises.

ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਾ ਆਹਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੇ ਮੀਤ ॥ (ਮ : ੫)

*Shabd* sung to proper music is the quickest way to put the human being into harmony with the Creator and the working of His created nature. Such music in Sikh parlance is called *Shabd kirtan*.



## THE SIKH KIRTAN

With the dawn of the sixteenth century AD, when Guru Nanak launched his "Operation Salvage" and started his mission, he chose music and poetry as the most effective and efficient vehicle for communicating the *Shabd* and his experience. *Shabd* is the *bani* and thus the Guru. It conveys wisdom and projects the mysteries of reality. It is not always possible for words and language to rightly convey the wisdom and spiritual experiences and rapturous thoughts which are sometimes so mystical and ecstatic.

In Hindu mythology, Saraswati is said to have created music, when she could not satisfactorily communicate her spiritual experience and knowledge through words then she had to subscribe to the use of Sound Absolute (*Nad Brahm*), for this was the only most proficient form of communication left to her. Herein she conveys "experience", pure as experience, without translating it into language. The limitation of words and language was thus surpassed. But this, however, had its own limitations. Experience communicated as nascent experience without words cannot be effective in the plane of reason. Since Sikhism depends and operates in the plane of reason, resorting to the absolute form of communication, however noble, would not have fitted into the dynamic concept of emancipation through knowledge. The tenth Satguru said :

Take the broom of Divine knowledge into thy hands, and sweep away timidity.

ਗਿਆਨਹਿ ਕੀ ਬਢਨੀ ਮਨੁ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ ਕਾਇਰਤਾ ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੈ ।

In Sikhism, this obstacle is overcome when we have the

*Shabd* in the form of *kirtan* — words, *shabd*, set to music and rhythm, utilising the experience communicating quality of singing, objectified emotional character of *Rag*, the infinite concept of *Tal* (ਤਾਲ), and the purposeful, meaningful, rationalisable and commonly understandable character of *bani* (ਬਾਣੀ) in the form of *Shabd*. Verse and music when brought together create a beauty and sweetness and generate a wave that bypasses the critical and calculative check-barrier of the brain and intellect and reaches the mind direct and lifts it to ecstasies and raptures and fills it with profound devotion and love, and brings it into direct contact with the Lord of the Universe.

The power that music and poetry generate cuts both ways. It is like a double-edged sword, the *khanda*. It can lead to the very presence of the Lord and bestow Eternal Bliss. And it can also lead to depravity, baseness, levity, immorality, and to hell and eternal ruin. That is why Emperor Aurangzeb outlawed music in his Indian Empire as a forbidden tool in Islamic worship. It is said that as a protest to this ban, the musicians of Delhi took out an effigy of music to be buried and marched in a procession through the streets of the capital and in the vicinity of the Emperor's residence in the Red Fort. When the Emperor heard their wails and bemoaning, he enquired what it was about. On being informed that the musicians, including the Royal *Kalakars*, were taking out 'music' in a coffin, to be buried, he retorted "tell them to bury it deep enough so that it may not rise again." But it depends on what the music is intended to convey. By the injunction that *Gurbani* be sung to music, this danger was warded off by the Satguru. Thus, this mighty power was tamed and diverted to a Divine purpose for the uplift and emancipation of mankind.

The Sikh *kirtan*, therefore, means singing the praises of the Lord. The conception of God and its interpretation differ according to different religions and schools of thought. In Sikh parlance the Lord, God, is Timeless and Formless, Supreme Being, the Eternal Ultimate Truth, that is both Absolute and Immanent. And the Guru is the Enlightener, the Instructor, who shows us the way and puts us in direct contact with the Supreme Being. So amongst the Sikhs

praises of the Lord are sung only in the *bani*, the *Shabd*, the Word, revealed to us by the Satguru. The Sikh Scripture imparts to us, besides spiritual enlightenment, guidance as to how this human span of life has to be fruitfully and successfully lived that it may be approved here and hereafter. The compositions of other men of God incorporated in the Holy Granth are also included in the *bani*. The injunction is :

O beloved disciples of the Satguru come and sing the True Word :

ਆਵਹੁ ਸਿਖ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਪਿਆਰਿਹੋ, ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ॥

Yes, sing the *bani* of the Guru which is the most sublime of all;

ਬਾਣੀ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇਰੀ ਬਾਣੀਆ ਸਿਰਿ ਬਾਣੀ ॥

because

Without the *bani* of the Satguru, all others are imperfect; ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਚੀ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ॥

Yes, the other *bani* is imperfect, which is not of the True Guru;

ਬਾਣੀ ਤ ਕਚੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਰ ਕਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ॥

Imperfect are those who utter, imperfect are those who listen, and also those who recite the other *bani*.

ਕਹਿਦੇ ਕਚੇ, ਸੁਣਦੇ ਕਚੇ, ਕਚੀ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣੀ ॥

This stress became necessary because as early as in the period of the second and third Nanaks, *Gurbani* began to be tampered with and adulterated. Steps, therefore, had to be taken to preserve its purity and sanctity. And there has been very strict observance of these steps. Along with the *bani* in Guru Granth Sahib, however, the compositions of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal have been approved by convention and permitted for inclusion in our *kirtan*. Bhai Gurdas was a contemporary of the fifth and sixth Satgurus and Bhai Nand Lal of the tenth Master.

Sikh worship is not passive adoration. It is masculine subscription of a ਪੁਰਖ, a man, towards his Lord whom he holds in high esteem. It is the devotion of a liberated man who stands erect. His songs, thus, are not lyrical to appeal to the sensual only. His songs are no doubt sweet for they portray love. But the essence is

spiritual love, pure love, his songs have longing (ਬਿਰਹਾ) in the sense of classical music and not the bemoanings of modern light entertainment.

Good music, even without words, must have a thought content (howsoever inexpressible in words). Only then can it ennoble the spirit, tranquillize and purgate the self in Aristotalian sense. It is, therefore, essential that the composition of the song must be capable of evolving or at least communicating, chaste sensibilities. The sensibility of the composition (ਬੰਦਸ਼) and the style of singing, therefore, must be complementary to the intent (ਭਾਵ) of the words of the *bani* (ਬਾਣੀ).

The Sikh *kirtan* not only takes this aspect of art into consideration but also goes one step further. It combines *tal* (ਤਾਲ), *lae* (ਲੈਅ), poetic meter and even the structure of poetry with the structure of classical Indian music.

The *lae* (ਲੈਅ) is defined on the *Shabds*. The *Shabd* construction and the metre of the poetry is so set up that the pattern of *lae* (ਲੈਅ) does not break the sentence. It accentuates it.

The *ghar* (ਘਰ) concept goes one step further. The poetic focal point of the stanza can occur after one or more sentences. The *ghar* concept illustrates the *avartis* (ਆਵਰਤੀ) or the number of rhythmic cycles after which the *sam* (ਸਮ) or the focal point of the rhythm pattern should be highlighted.

Going one step further is the *rahao* (ਰਹਾਉ) in the *Shabds*. The aesthetes in Indian musicology, structure a composition as consisting of *asthai* (ਅਸਥਾਈ), *antra* (ਅੰਤਰਾ), *sanchari* (ਸੰਚਾਰੀ) and *abhog* (ਆਭੋਗ), interpreted as thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis and limitation of the *ambit* of the *Rag*. This very definition lifts the art of Indian music on to the plane of the sublime. Like all great arts it becomes the evolution of the paradox. The *bani* (ਬਾਣੀ) of the Sikhs too is sublime. So the initiators of the *kirtan* concept, structured their poetry and their singing so that it could fit onto this pattern and be doubly effective.

In *kirtan* it is the sentence before the pause (ਰਹਾਉ) which is always sung as the *asthai* (ਅਸਥਾਈ). It is also a known fact that this sentence (ਤੁਕ) always has the burden of the thought content of the



*Shabd*. Also, the sentence after the pause (ਰਹਾਉ) elaborates, explains and puts forth the other side of the thought. Thus, the whole concept is an integrated approach.

*Kirtan* envelops the personality on the sensual plane with melody, on the intellectual plane with the homely rationale of the *bani* (ਬਾਣੀ), and on the emotional plane with the nobility of the Indian classical music.

This worship is, thus, to the total involvement of the human psyche. It is similar to experiencing His Creation on all planes (ਅਖੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ, ਕੰਨੀ ਬਾਣੀ). The experience of His presence thus becomes total.

Thus, when *Shabds* (ਸ਼ਬਦ) are sung to purely sensual, erotic type of tunes, not only the aesthetics but the very purpose, sanctity, and the sacrament of worship is violated in a most destructive way.

The Sikh *kirtan* is distinct and different from other devotional songs, *bhajans*, *qawalis*, and *nats* as well as from *Shastri Sangeet*. It has a tradition and structure, a background and image of its own. It has its own uniqueness and speciality. It is devotional as well as classical music. It has brought together *dhrupad* (ਧਰੁਪਦ), *partial* (ਪੜਤਾਲ), and *khayal* (ਖਿਆਲ) with *ritis* and various *dhunis* (ਧੁਨੀ) of *vars* (ਵਾਰ) (the Greek odes) and some folklores like *pade* (ਪਦੇ), *alahniyan* (ਅਲਾਹਣੀਆਂ), *ghorian* (ਘੋੜੀਆਂ), *raho* (ਰਹੋਇ), *birhare* (ਬਿਰਹੜੇ), *mangal* (ਮੰਗਲ) and *lavan* (ਲਾਵਾਂ), after recasting them into proper *Rags* and giving them a classical tinge. It is primarily *kirtan* wherein *Shabd* and their pronunciation and meaning, got predominance over other things. *Tan*, *palta*, *murki*, etc., are all brought in but as decoration, not clouding the real intent which is the *Shabd*. They form an essential part of Sikh *kirtan*. But they are meant to beautify and sweeten the *Rag* and the singing of the *Shabd* and not to subdue the Word. The Sikh *kirtan* has to be a judicious combination of all of them, with one end grounded on earth and the other soaring high up to heaven and infinity. It is the spiritual aspect which is glorified so that the mind gets attuned with the Will of the Master and reaches a state of peace and bliss.

This special type of music was introduced by Sri Guru Nanak Dev with the dawn of the sixteenth century. It developed and

progressed and was taken to soaring heights during the two hundred years of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries under the personal care, and patronage of the Satguru's nine successors. Bhai Mardana, Satta, and Balwand, were its well-known exponents from the first to the fifth Satguru, and had the unique honour of having their compositions included in the Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The whole of the Sikh Scripture is poetry set to rhythm and perfect classical and devotional music. It is divided into thirty-one main *Rags*. If sub-heads of mixed *Rags* are counted, the number goes up to fifty. Besides the *bani* of the Gurus, there is the *bani* (compositions) of thirty-five other men of God who believed in the One-Formless-Timeless- God (ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ-ਅਕਾਲ) and the brotherhood of man. Where there were fifty-two poets under the service and patronage of the tenth Satguru, there were also a large number of musicians in his court at Paonta Sahib and at Anandpur Sahib. We find that in the *Dasam Granth*, there are as many as seventy-three special *chhands*, called *sangeet chhands*, set to the rhythm and beats of *mridang*. These cannot even be read and pronounced correctly unless one is conversant with the art of playing the *mridang*.

That is why this special type of music, the Sikh *kirtan*, is also known as Sikh *sangeet* and *Gurmat sangeet*. This high class music conveying the *Shabd* is also generally and correctly called *Shabd kirtan*. The fifth Satguru in *Rag Sorath* says :

The Divine Word is the *Shabd* which is the only right speech :

ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁਭਾਖਿਆ ॥

Sing it, listen to it, and recite it always, and the perfect Guru will save you :

ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਪੜਹੁ ਨਿਤ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੈ ਤੂ ਰਾਖਿਆ ॥

*Kirtan* is, thus, the best (because, reading and hearing are also accepted) form of worship in Sikhism. After enumerating different ways and forms of worship, the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun Dev, says in *Rag Sorath* :

The most sublime and superior way is the singing of the Lord's praises in the company of the Guru;

ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਹੈ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਮਨ ਕੈ ਕਰਮਾ ॥

It should be noted that the words *Sadh* and *Sant* are often used in *Gurbani* for the Guru himself as in :

On meeting the Lord's *Sant*, the Guru *Sadh*, anoint the face with the dust of his feet :

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਸੰਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਧੂ ਲੈ ਤਿਸਕੀ ਧੂਰਿ ਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਈ ॥

The praises of the Lord cannot be sung if the mind is disrupted and is infected with duality. They can only be sung properly and profitably if the mind is at rest and attuned to the *Shabd*. Sikh *Sangeet* is a great and special contribution of the Punjab to Indian classical music.

A good *kirtankar*, *ragi* or *rababi*, who knows the tradition and *maryada* of the Sikh *kirtan*, always starts the *kirtan* with a proper *manglacharan*, vocal and, time permitting, instrumental. *Manglacharan* is to invoke the Omnipresent God and the Guru, as well as to serve the purpose of *Alap*, to define and project the correct image of the *Rag* to be sung. The first *Shabd* to be sung is invariably in pure *Khayal Rag* in the form of a *partial*, a *dhrupad*, or some traditionally set tune. Then will follow the lighter singing of the type of *Vadda* (ਵੱਡਾ) or *Chhota* (ਚੋਟਾ) *Khayal* or some other traditional tunes, later including the singer's own creation, if any. During this item *parmans* (ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ) in support and in explanation of points and subjects in the main *Shabd* being sung, are given. The durations of the first *Shabd* and the lighter item can be prolonged according to the time available. But all this is always in a proper *Rag*; may be light, difficult, mellow, or hard. When winding up the *kirtan*, such a singer will do so singing a *shlok* or a short *Shabd* followed by a *Pauri* of the *Var* of the *Rag* befitting the time of the day. When *Karah Parshad* is to be distributed, the first five and the last *Pauris* of *Anand* are also sung. When these six *Pauris* of *Anand* have been sung or recited before, as in a wedding ceremony (ਅਨੰਦ ਕਾਰਜ), the *kirtan* is wound up with a *Shlok* or *Shabd* followed by a *Pauri* of the *Var* in *Rag Bilawal*. There are twenty-two *Vars* in different *Rags* in *Guru Granth Sahib*. On some of the *Vars*, the tunes (ਧੁਨੀਆਂ) in which they are to be sung are precisely given. Singing of *Vars* began on the pattern of Greek odes with their strophes and

antistrophes when the Greeks came to India. We have also a tradition of singing particular *Rags* for different seasons and times of the day. For instance, *Asa Rag* is sung both at dawn and dusk, and *Basant* is sung from the first of the month of *Magh* (ਮਾਘ) to the beginning of *Chet* (ਚੇਤ). During this period while *Basant* holds sway, *Sarang* remains shut out. *Sarang* follows from mid *Vaisakh* (ਵਿਸਾਖ) to end of *Asar* (ਅਸਾੜੁ), when *Malhar* takes the field and reigns supreme in *Sawan* (ਸਾਵਣ) and *Bhadon* (ਭਾਦੋਂ). There is an old tradition and convention that in the morning sittings pure *Gurbani* is sung and *Permans* (ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ) from *Gurbani* alone are given, while it is in the afternoons and in evenings that *Sakhi Parmans* (ਸਾਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ) are given and instances from Sikh history are quoted and *Vars* of Sikh knights and *shaheeds* are sung.

From 1916 to 1919, I was at the Khalsa College, Amritsar, and used to go twice or thrice a week to the Golden Temple to hear the Divine music. I saw personally these traditions and *maryada* being meticulously observed. I had the good luck to hear some well-known exponents of the Sikh *Sangeet* like Bhai Moti (his son was my class fellow in College), Bhai Lal, Bhai Chand, and Sant Sham Singh of Amritsar, and Mahant Gajja Singh (I started playing on *dilruba* under his guidance), Bhai Mastan Singh, and Bhai Ghasita of Patiala (who was my teacher in vocal music and I learnt most of the *Dhunis*, *Ritis*, *Partals*, and other traditional tunes from him). During the time of His Holiness my late worshipful father, some sixty-five years ago, we had a great *Kirtankar*, Bhai Waziroo, who was an expert *mridung* player and while doing so he also led in vocal singing, which is a rare combination of the two arts. Later on, I heard the famous Bhai Bhag Singh of Faruka and the great Bhai Jwala Singh and others. I wish the tape recorder had been invented some years earlier. I remember well having heard all the twenty four *Chhaka's* sung with *Asa di Var* in twenty-four sweet different tunes and all the different *Dhunis* of the different *Vars* given in Guru Granth Sahib. But, unfortunately, all this valuable treasure is being lost. It is being eroded and elbowed out every day and is being replaced by street type of trash tunes and cinema-song notes which carry all their atmosphere of cheap frivolity and

base levity with them. About such tunes the Satguru has said :

O my Beloved ! let me not hear

ਮੇਰੇ ਮੋਹਨ ਸੁਣਨੀ ਇਹ ਨ ਸੁਨਾਏ ॥

The heretic degraded who sing tunes and songs but speak unbecoming language .

ਸਾਕਤ ਗੀਤ ਨਾਦ ਧੁਨਿ ਗਾਵਤ ਬੋਲਤ ਬੋਲ ਅਜਾਏ ॥

All these great *kalakars* of Sikh *Sangeet*, I noted, had some very common features, similar habits, and ways to keep up, develop and project their art. It will be interesting to mention a few of these.

They were all very early risers. Before dawn they devoted one to two hours daily to vocal practice and in defining their notes to minutest accuracy. By this daily practice, called *riaz*, they had cultivated, cultured, and developed sweet mellowness in their voices. They could generate such tremendous volume that no need was ever felt for an amplifier. Mahant Gajja Singh was an expert in playing on the *dilruba* and the *taoos*. He was considered to be an unparalleled instrumentalist of his time. He too used to sit up in his bed between 2:30 and 3:00 AM and bring his vocal cords into proper function. This practice (*riaz*) was his daily routine for two hours regularly. They had inexhaustible treasure of tunes and *Gurbani*, committed to memory; there being no recording or annotations. You could hear them for months and every time they would bring out new tunes and new *Shabds*. Invariably the burden of the song was the line preceding the (pause) *Rahao* in the *Shabd*. They strictly adhered to the tradition and technique and *maryada* of the Sikh *kirtan* as laid down by Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Arjun, and propounded by Bhai Mardana and others. One very distinguishing feature amongst them was that they did *kirtan* in the presence of the Satguru, to invoke His blessings; He being ever present in the Khalsa and the *sangat*.

The pity is that none of these great *kalakar* masters have been able to leave behind any one of their progeny fit enough to keep the candle of their precious art burning bright, except of course Bhai Jwala Singh whose son Bhai Avtar Singh has learnt and inherited the unique tradition and technique, *Dhunis* and *Ritis*,

*Partals* and compositions of the Sikh *Sangeet* from his great father. All these techniques and traditions are nowadays more flouted than observed. *Asa di Var* of Bhai Surjan Singh is a glaring example of it. The Satguru's instructions to sing this *Var* on a particular pattern (ਟੁੰਡੇ ਅਸਰਾਜੇ ਕੀ ਧੁਨੀ) are blown to the winds.

The structure of the *Var* has a significance. *Asa di Var* fits into it. No wonder this particular style was chosen for rendering one of the most essential, purposeful, and delineative expositions of the basic principles of Sikhism. This *Var* is, therefore, a special and significant item in the Sikh *kirtan*.

In method, sequence, and coherence of thought *Asa di Var* is as perfect as the *Japuji*. It gives us guidance in fulfilling our duties, both spiritual as well as worldly. It brings us into harmony with the Supreme Being and is aimed at turning men into gods. It brings home to us the presence of God sublimely diffused in the form of definite laws of nature. Everything is perishable that changes form, though His creation is a reality and not a myth because of His Presence in it. It warns us not to work in disharmony with, and antagonism to, this working of the Supreme Spirit. At this stage fear and discipline is depicted as the motive-force working everywhere, even in so-called gods. Undivided devotion and loyalty to one Supreme God is thus secured. God's service is to be done by actual practice of positive virtues like mercy and righteousness. In *Asa di Var* the Guru has taken up the actual moulding of the individual character by eradicating ego of all kinds. This is done not by killing ego or individual will, but by attuning our tiny will to the Supreme Will. By killing ego or our will outright, even virtue is made impossible as it destroys the very consciousness of the self, which is the basis of our moral nature and makes the realisation of God possible (ਹਉਮੈ ਦੀਰਘ ਰੋਗੁ ਹੈ ਦਾਰੂ ਭੀ ਇਸੁ ਮਾਰਿ). Besides ego, the Satguru has warned us against the devastating effects of pride of caste, religion, riches, power, etcetera. Sweetness and humility are the essence of all virtue. God is pleased with love and faith alone. Pride of gender and false ideas of impurity are then denounced. It is the mind which has to be cleared of all impurities and brought in harmony and in tune with the Supreme Master.

After fear, the stage comes when fear of God's displeasure dispels all other fears and love of God becomes the motive force.

What sort of service is that in which the fear of the Master does not depart ?

ਏਹ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਭਉ ਖਸਮ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

In this life of love and self-surrender one begins to work in complete unison, harmony and rhythm with God's Eternal Will. The Satguru's Way is not merely an intellectual way but of personal action too. In the life and working career of the Sikh, the personality of the Guru is all along operative. This personality creates cohesion and works as a force to connect humans, with humans and with God. Without it, every body would exist for himself in moral isolation. It is the Guru who removes the barriers of caste and status and gathering them all into himself unites them with God. In this way foundations are laid of a society of men-of-God, the elevated men turned into gods. This is what *Asa di Var* explains to us.

Most of our present-day *ragis* do *kirtan* with their eyes only on the pockets and purses of the listeners. They spare little time for *riaz* and further improvement. They spare no time to learn and practise. These are essential to keep up the standard. Without this, the *kalakar* cannot progress and shine. But to go up the height requires energy, struggle, and perseverance, while to slip down calls for no effort. Such *kalakars*, therefore, take to cheap street tunes in a hurry to make quick money. They, thus, make no contribution to preserve and develop the standards of music set by the Satguru.

Though Eastern and Western music are very different from each other, the West with its proper annotations has preserved to the minutest detail what their great masters composed four five centuries ago. Even in our own South, the compositions of Tyagraj are being kept untouched and sung in their original form. The Sikh *Kirtankars* should try to emulate them and not take pride in disfiguring and corrupting the compositions coming down to them from the Guru period itself. The style and standard of Sikh music and singing of *Shabds* is deteriorating day by day. Instead of

devoting themselves and putting in efforts to follow the great masters of Sikh Music and maintaining the traditional standards, our singers have taken the easier route and started to copy the singing of simple *bhajans* and *bhetan*. The Sikh leadership and keepers of our faith at the Harmandar have an obligation to Sikhism, to at least keep our mode of prayer and worship meaningful and pure. It is painful to observe that even at the Golden Temple the standard of Sikh *Sangeet* has started to fall from its lofty pedestal. Generally, our *kirtankars* argue that they do so because the audience does not appreciate the high standard of traditional music. But how can the poor listeners do so when they have never heard that type of music. This is only a lame excuse of the *Ragis* to camouflage their weakness. My personal observation is that the whole *sangat* acclaims and gets into raptures when a traditional *Riti* or *Dhuni* is sung. And it is for our *ragi kalakars* to mould the ear of the listener to it.

Fortunately, there is a silver lining on the otherwise dark horizon. Our younger *kalakars* are becoming more conscious of their duty to uphold, preserve, revive, and rejuvenate this gift of Satguru. Their desire, keenness, and enthusiasm have been personally conveyed to me by some of them. It is time that institutions like the SGPC, the DGPC, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, and our Punjabi and Guru Nanak Dev Universities appreciate the essential need of it and take this work in hand. The Universities could create Chairs and add the Sikh *Sangeet* as a special subject in their Music Examinations and offer it for research. It is also the duty of the Punjab Government to protect and develop this unique contribution of Punjab to Indian classical music.



## KARAM

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*Karam* means actions according to which we get the resultant fruit. This is the theory of cause and effect. So far Sikhism accepts the *Karam* theory. In *Var Asa*, the first Satguru says :

The reward of good or bad actions shall have to be met by oneself.

ਮੰਦਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਾਵਣਾ ॥

The fourth Satguru in *Var Gauri* says :

In Kaliyug age body is the field of *Karam* : in it as one sows so one reaps.

ਕਰਮ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਵਿਚ ਜੇਹਾ ਕੋ ਬੀਜੇ ਤੇਹਾ ਕੋ ਖਾਏ ॥

But the theory that the operation of the *Karam* is inevitable and there is no possible escape from it and that the entire working in this world is subservient to it, has done an irreparable damage to the Indian nation and country. The great doings of great men, being labelled as just a result of some previous good *Karam*, lost their shine and lustre. Thus, the sufferings which Sri Ram Chander, Daropadi and others had to bear and the fatal shock which Raja Dasrath received at his son's exile, were all attributed to results of some bad deeds in previous life. As a result, when there was a calamity, oppression, tyranny, or bloodshed, it came to be regarded as a result of some previous *Karam* and was either tolerated with abject surrender and prostration or people slipped away from their homes and families and repaired to jungles and places not easily approachable. This created helplessness and imbecility. By and by, the idea of doing good to another, making a sacrifice, or bearing trouble for the sake of any one else, disappeared from people's

minds. The sentiment of sympathy, empathy, welfare of the people, etc., disappeared. The purpose of spiritual effort also took the shape of perfect calm, and static inaction with a stoppage of all thought and effort. The worldly responsibilities were dreaded as traps of *maya*. Any one who had any inclination towards spiritual advancement, gave up worldly activities, and feeling bored with life, repaired to the wilderness, the forests or the hills, practised controlled breathing and subduing the mind, in the false hope of hearing *anhad shabd* and to have visions. In the wilderness, they depended on the mercy of others, without doing any good to their own people or anyone else. This attitude combined with personal individual way of worship and caste divisions made the people devoid of any idea or sentiment of love of the country, love of nation or even pan-nationalism. They became incapable, thus, of defending themselves, their country, their hearths and homes and even their *dharam* and religion. And this was the cause of India's long slavery and serfdom.

This outlook of helpless inactivity was rectified by Sikhism. Sikhism accepted the *Karam* theory but not its automatic mechanical inexorability, nor its inevitableness. Sikhism subordinates its operation to the Will of the God-Guru and believes that as we are ourselves responsible for our actions, *Karam*, we are also capable of unmaking them with the Grace of the Satguru and undo their effect with power of *simran* and a drop of the Nectar of the Name. The fifth Satguru says in *Var Jait Sri* :

Millions of sins are destroyed on remembering the One God.

ਕੋਟਿ ਅਘਾ ਗਏ ਨਾਸ ਹਰਿ ਇਕੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ॥

Again in *Rag Gujri*, he says :

By contemplating Whom we are rid of all our sins, and even our ancestors are redeemed,

ਜਿਸੁ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਨਾਸਹਿ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਹੋਇ ਉਧਾਰੇ ॥

Remember that Infinite Lord you also for ever.

ਸੇ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਤੁਮ ਸਦ ਹੀ ਜਾਪਹੁ ਜਾਕਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਰੈ ॥

In *Rag Bhairon*, Rav Das says :

When Knowledge (*Gian*) is attained, the action (*Karam*),

is nullified.

ਗਿਆਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਤਹ ਕਰਮਹ ਨਾਸੁ ॥

While in *Rag Bilaval*, Sadhna has crisply put it thus :

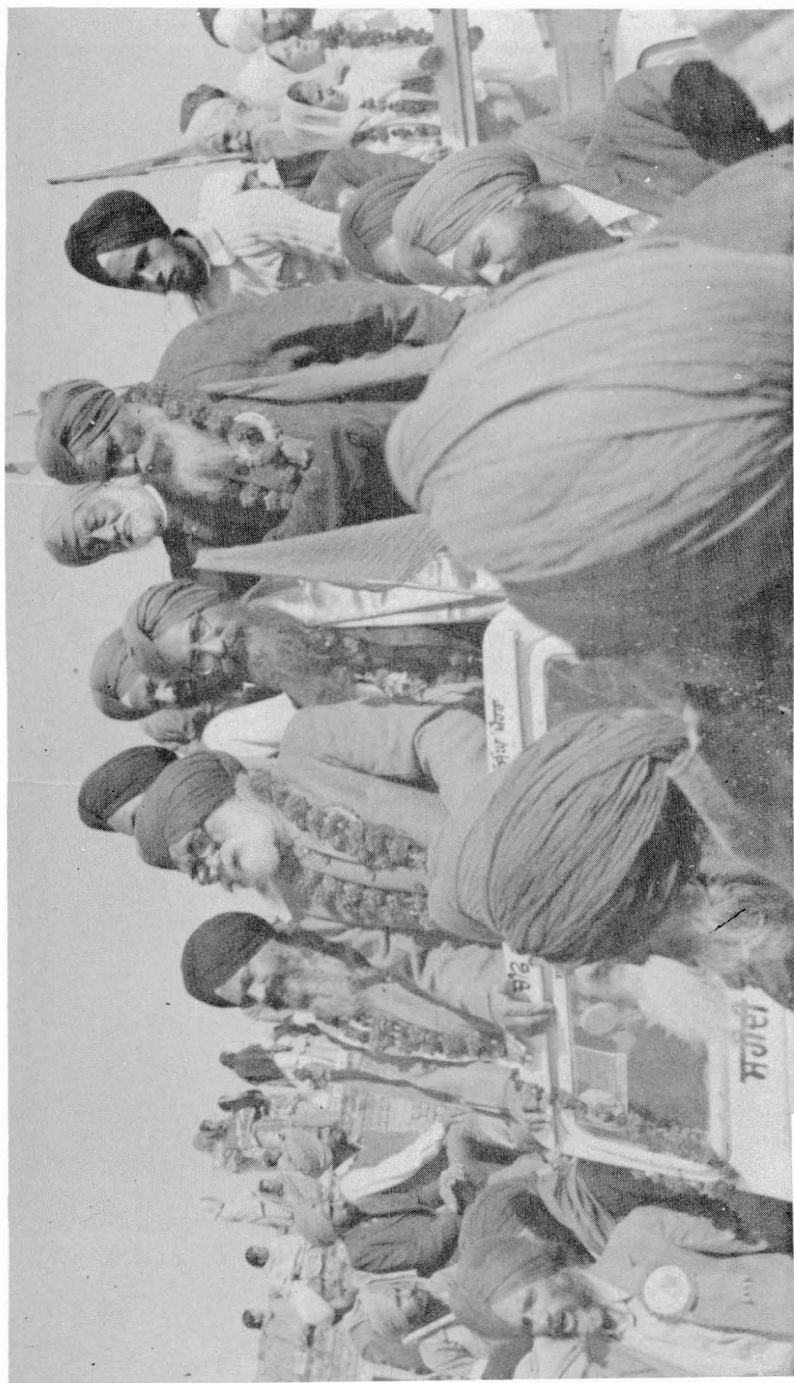
What is your merit, O Guru of the world, if the *karam* is not nullified ?

ਤਵ ਗੁਨ ਕਹਾ ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰਾ ਜਉ ਕਰਮੁ ਨ ਨਾਸੈ ॥

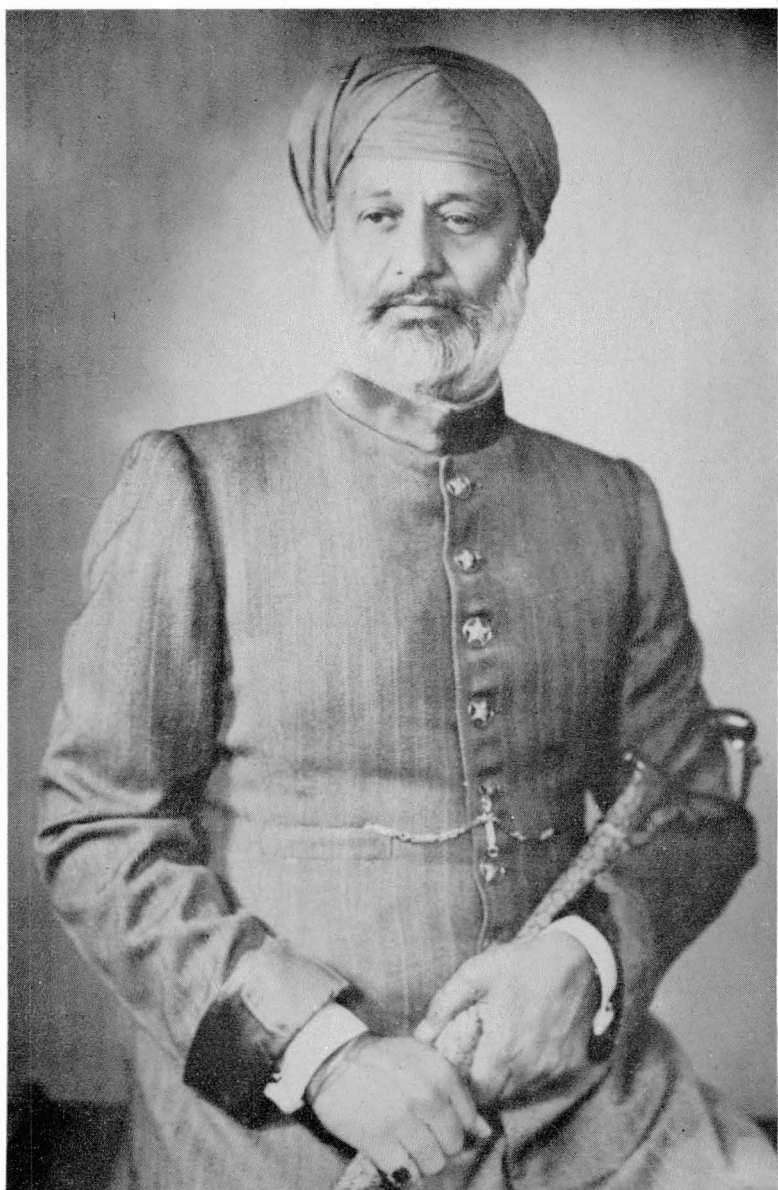
Why take refuge with a lion, if the fear of a jackal persists ?

ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਨ ਕਤ ਜਾਈਐ ਜਉ ਜੰਬੁਕੁ ਗਾਸੈ ॥

❧



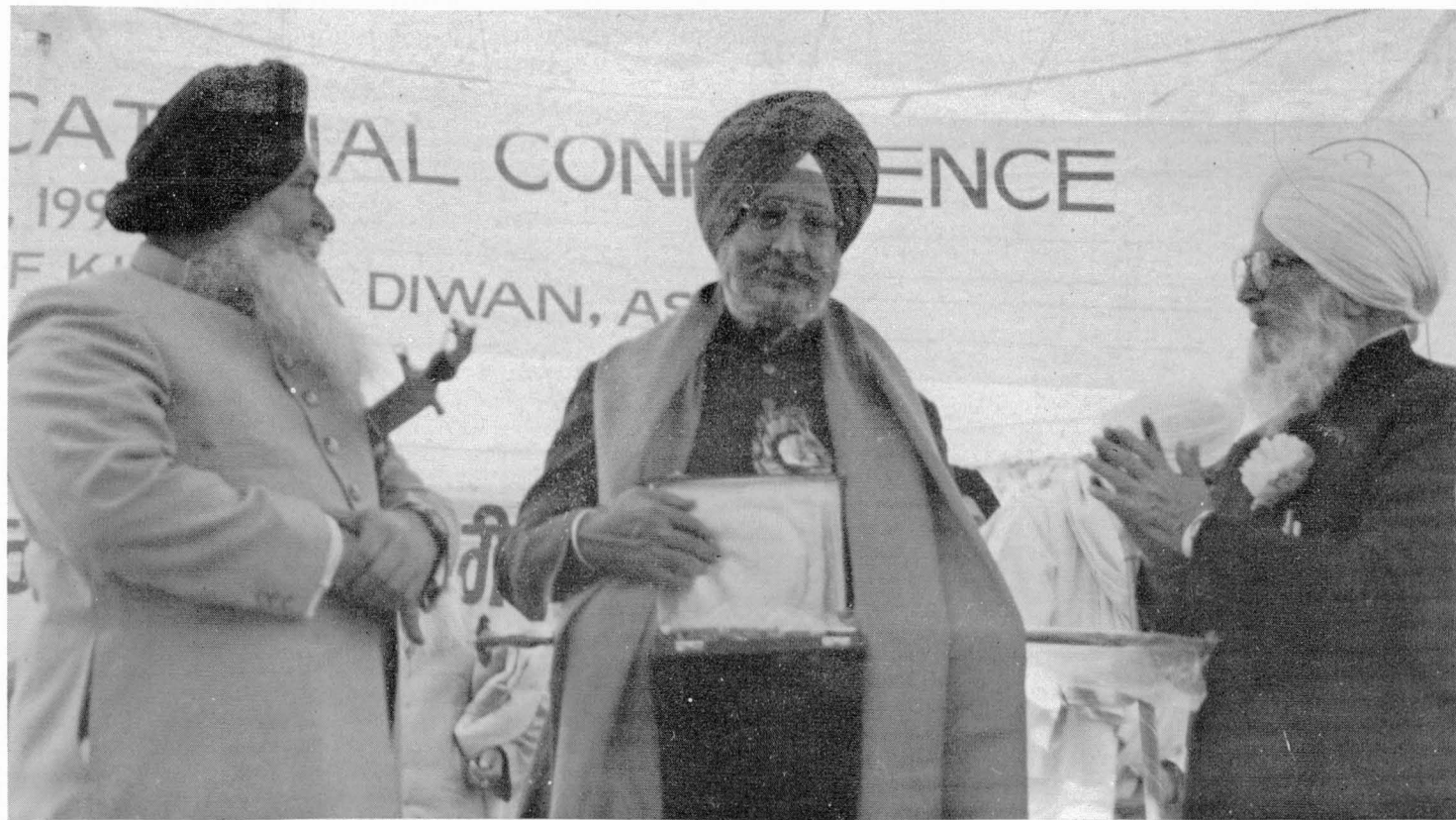
Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh at the beginning of *Shahidi March* at Anandpur Sahib.



Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh with the sword bestowed by Guru Gobind Singh to Bhai Rup Chand for *Amrit Parchar*.

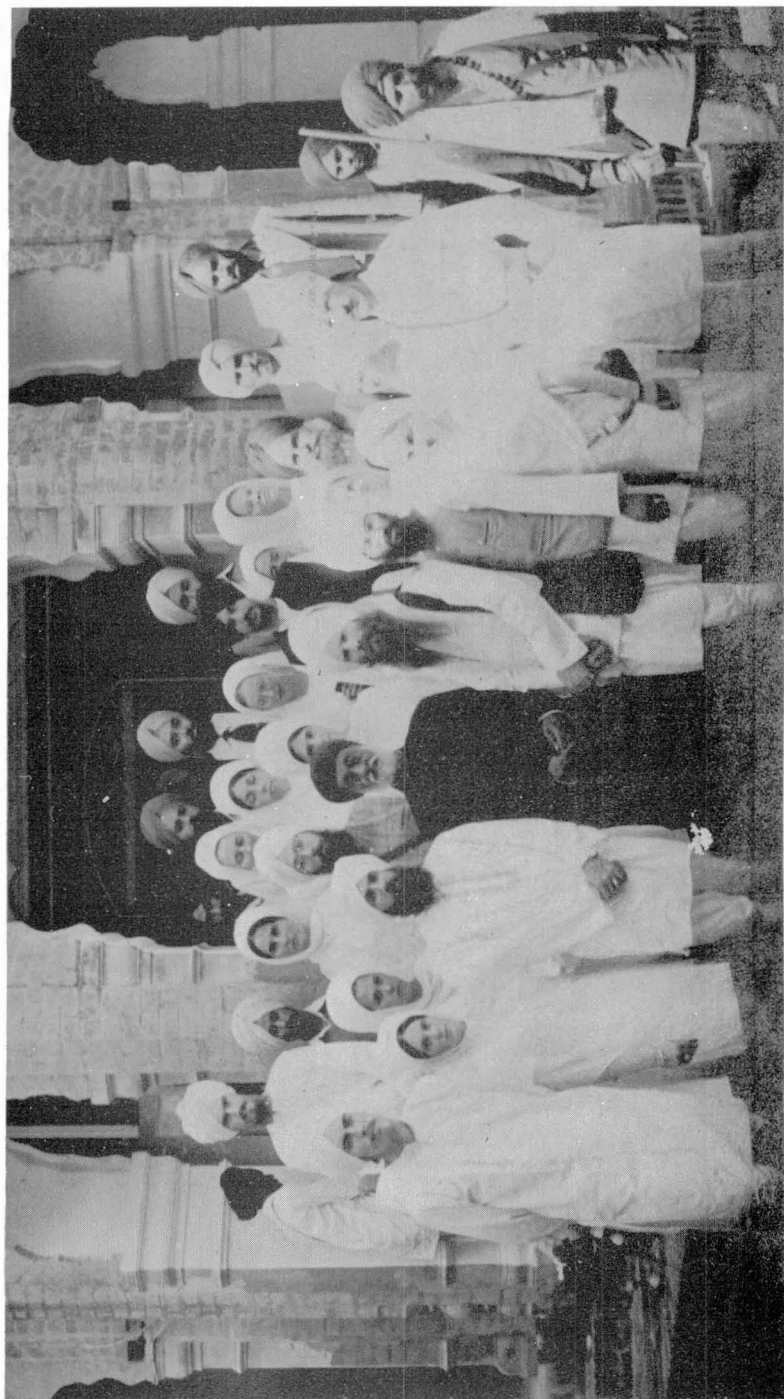


Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh was honoured posthumously for his services to the Panth at the Vishav Sikh Sammelan, 1995.



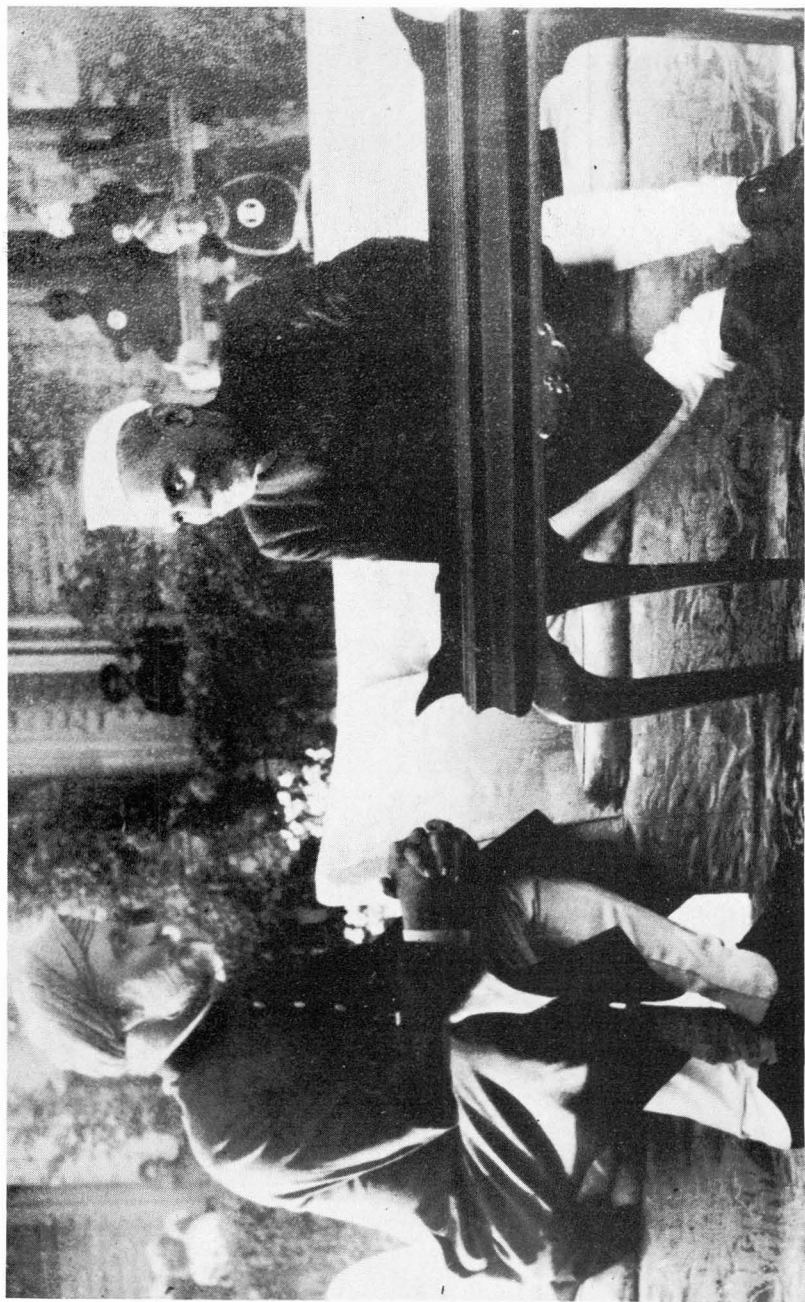
Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh was honoured posthumously for his services to the Panth by the Chief Khalsa Diwan.



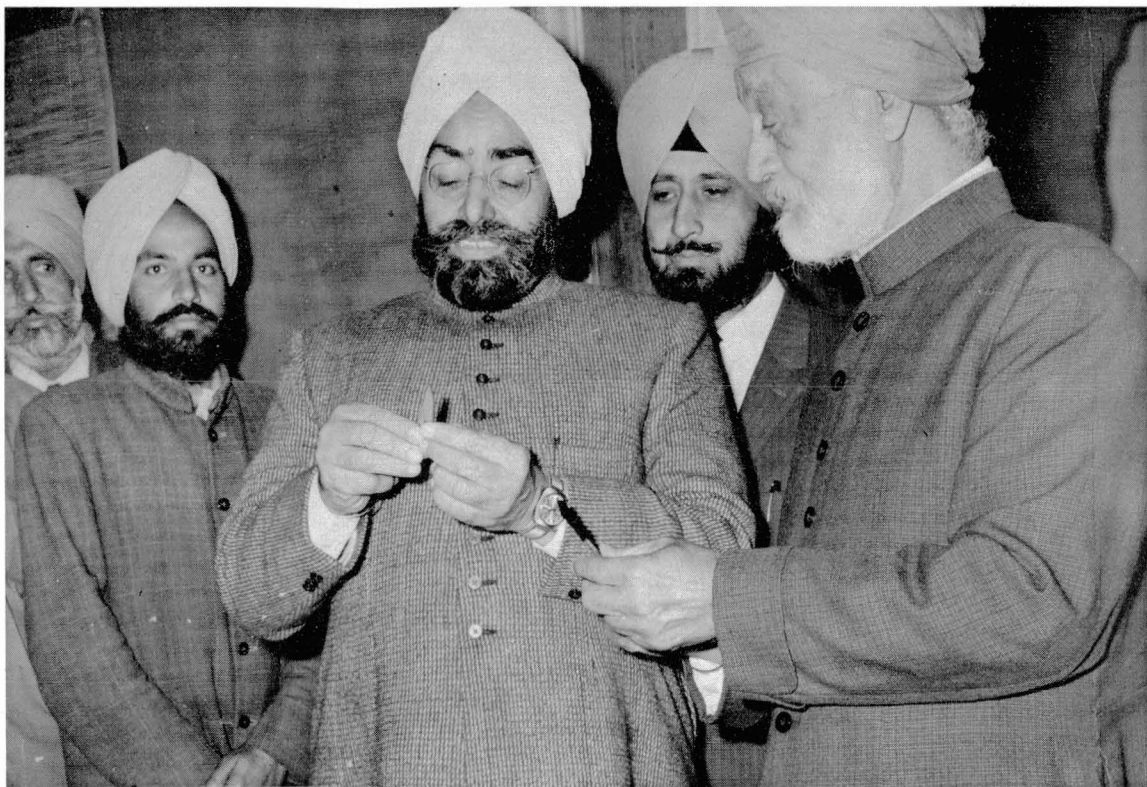


Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh with a *jatha* of American Sikhs at Bagrian.

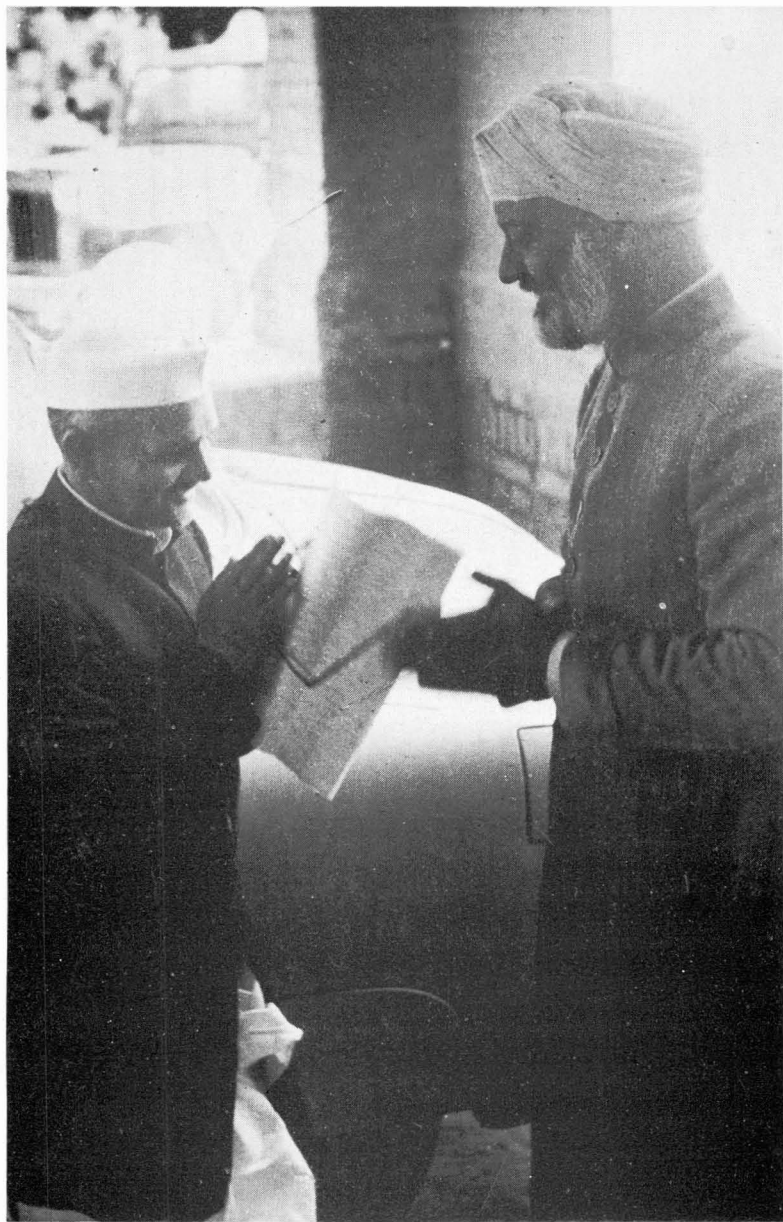




Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh with President of India, Dr Rajinder Parsad, at Simla.



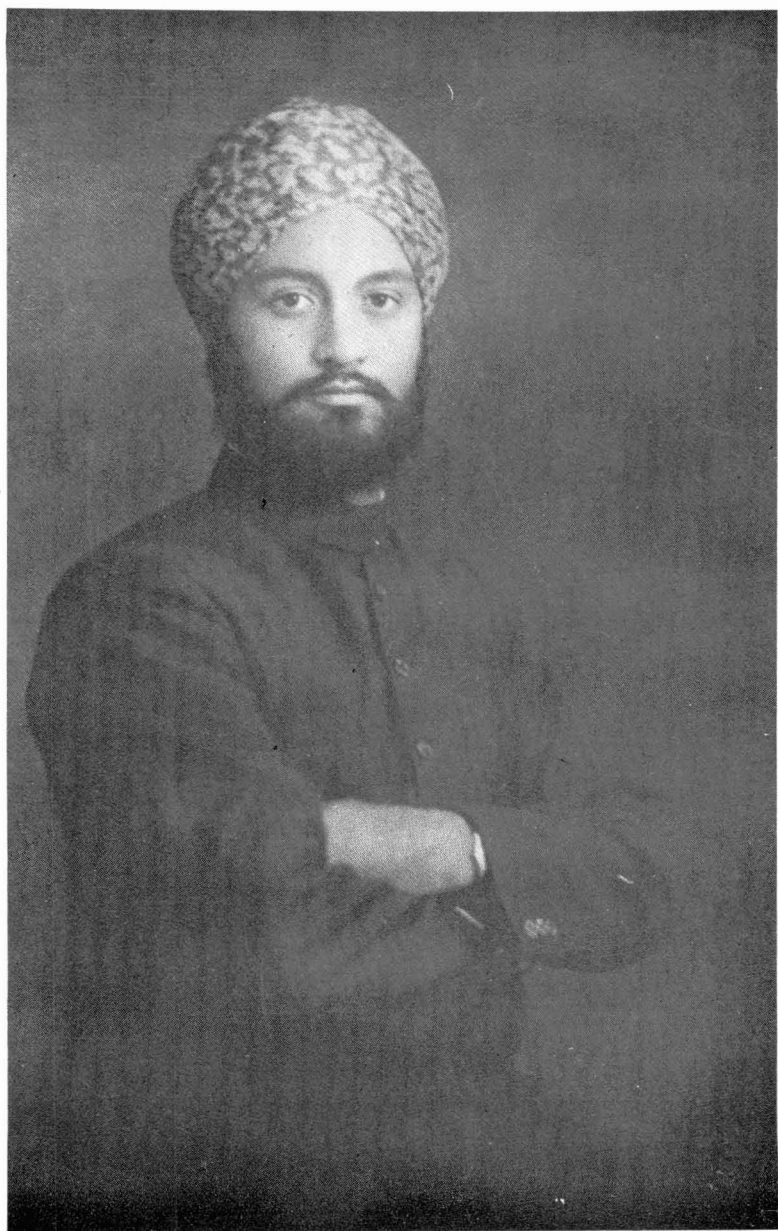
Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh showing relics of Guru Gobind Singh to Giani Zail Singh, the then Chief Minister of Punjab.



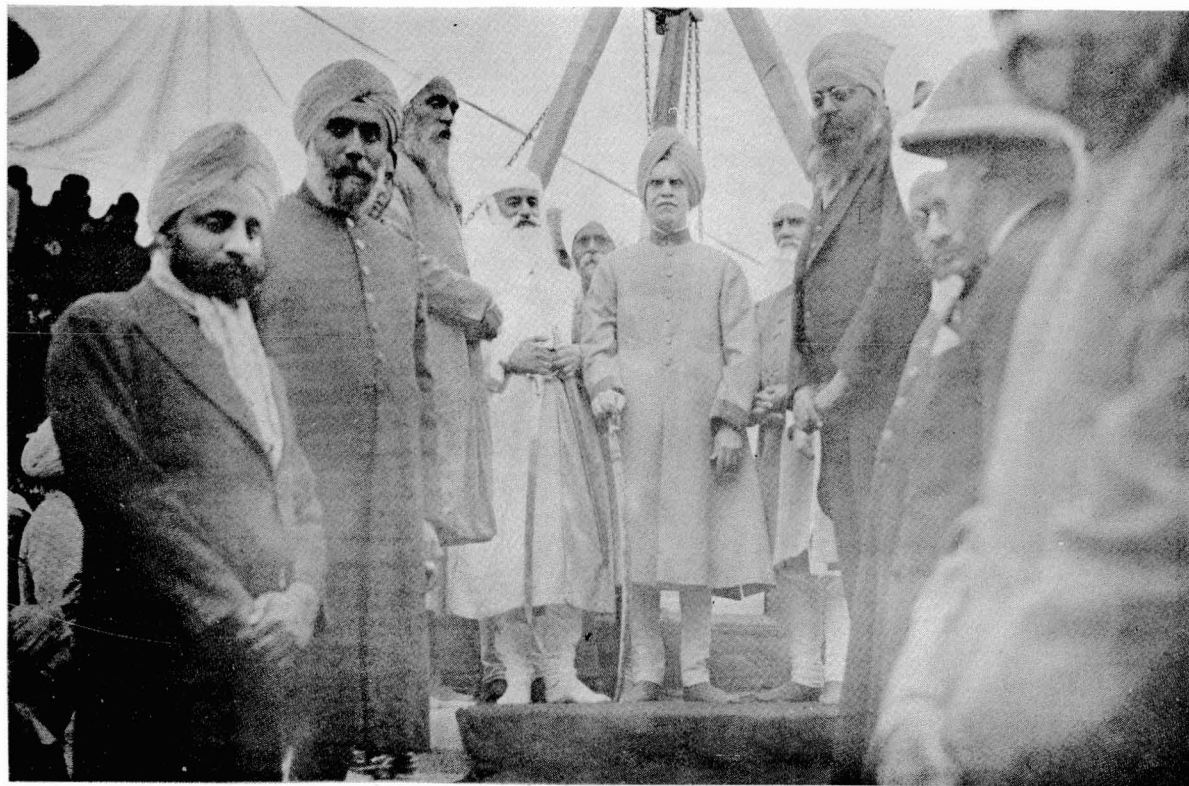
Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh receiving Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri,  
Prime Minister of India, at Bagrian.



His Holiness, The Bhai Sahib, Bhai Arjan Singh.

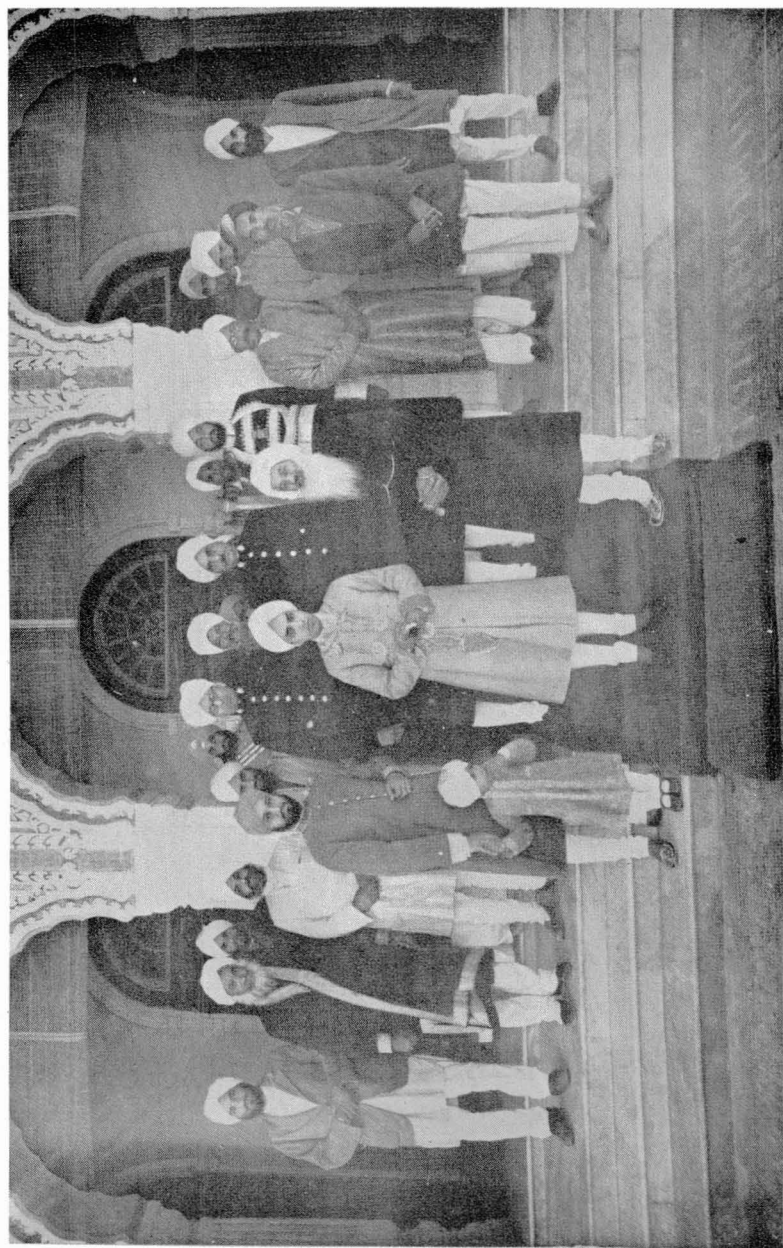


Tikka Ardaman Singh Bhayee.

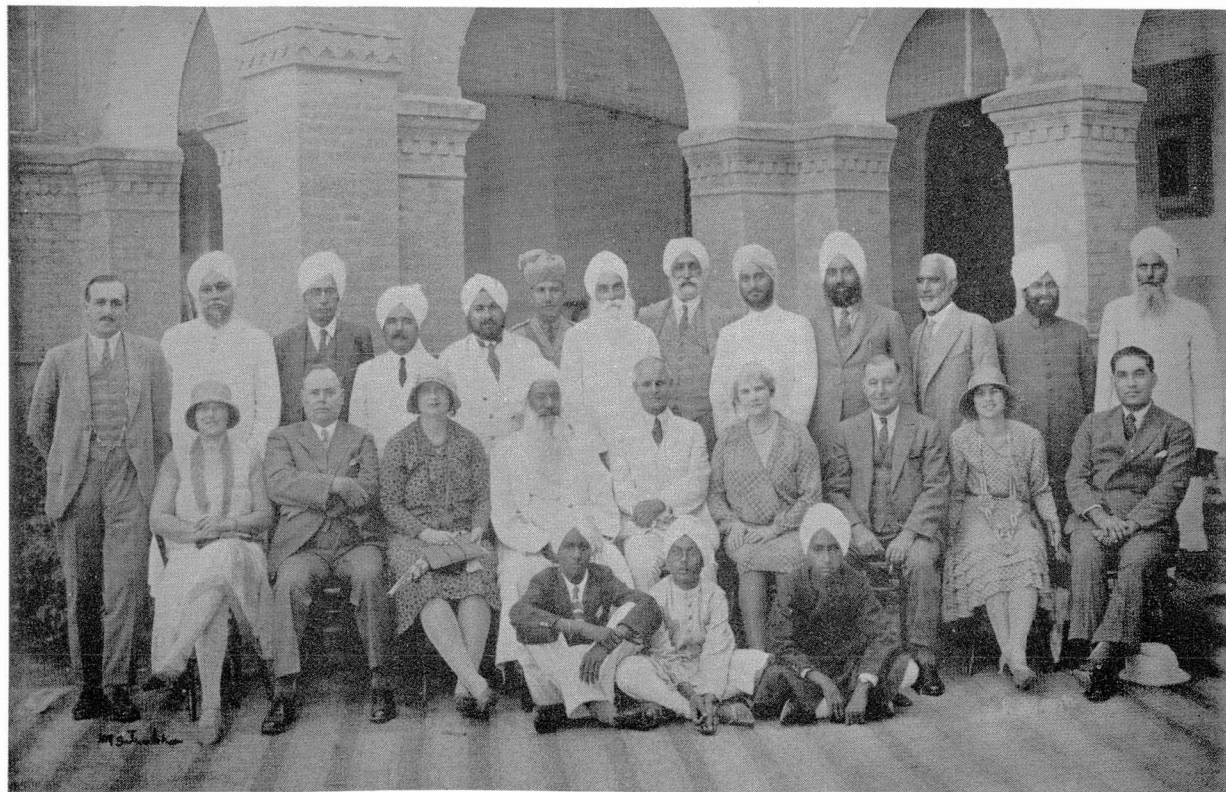


His Holiness laying the Foundation Stone of Gurdwara Sahib Ber, Sultanpur, Kapurthala State,  
in presence of H.H. Maharaja of Kapurthala.



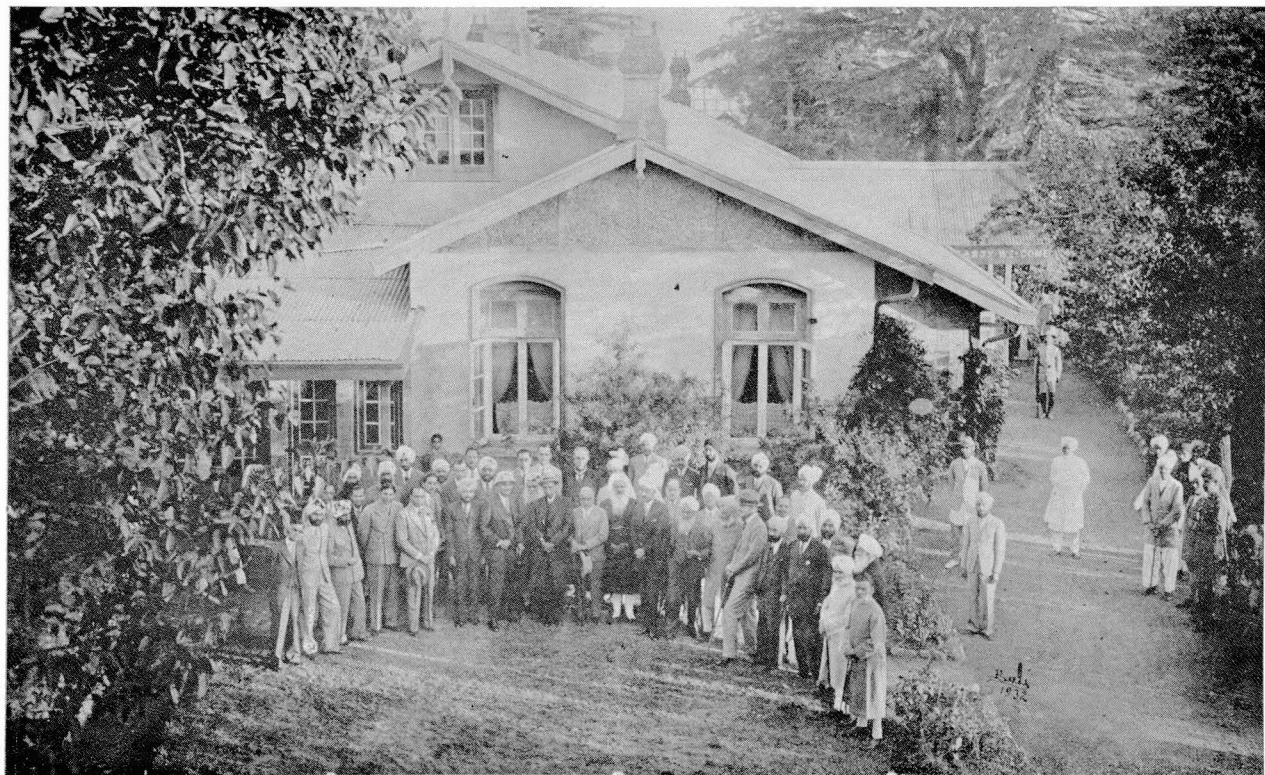


H.H. Tikka Raja Sahib of Kapurthala at the Durbar Hall, Bagrian.

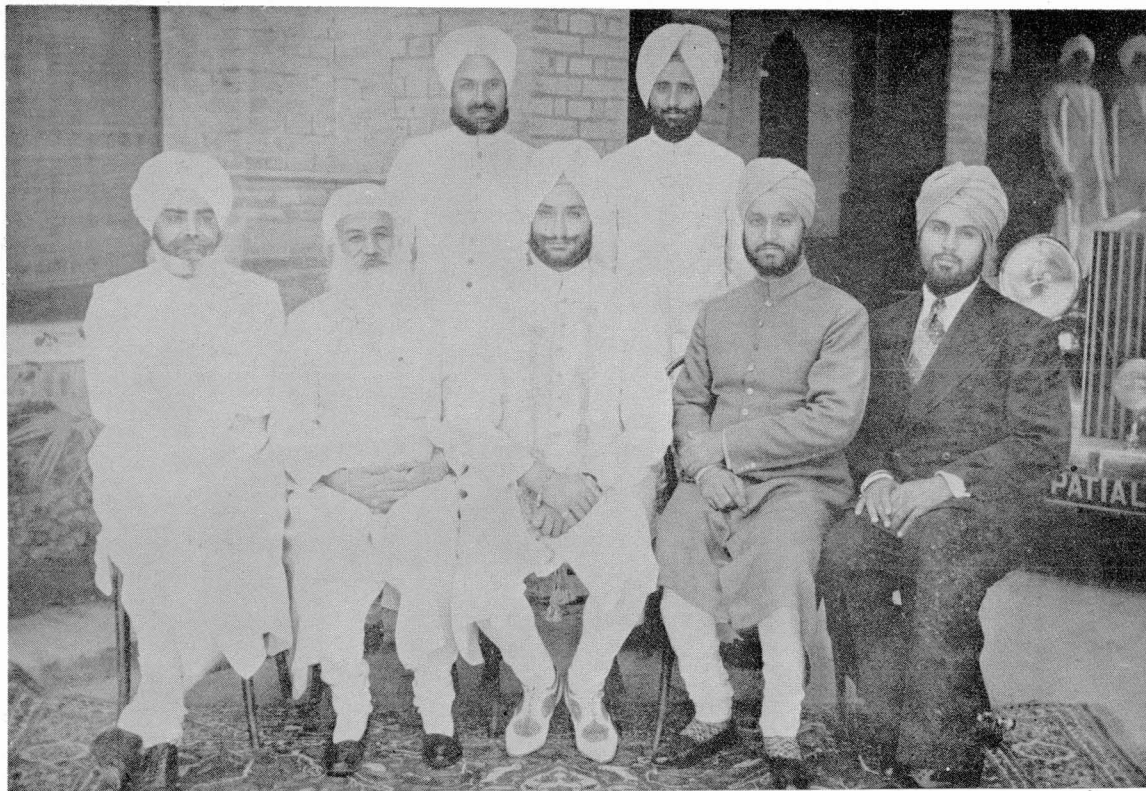


H.E. Field Marshal Sir W. Birdwood, Commander-in-Chief, India, at Bagrian.

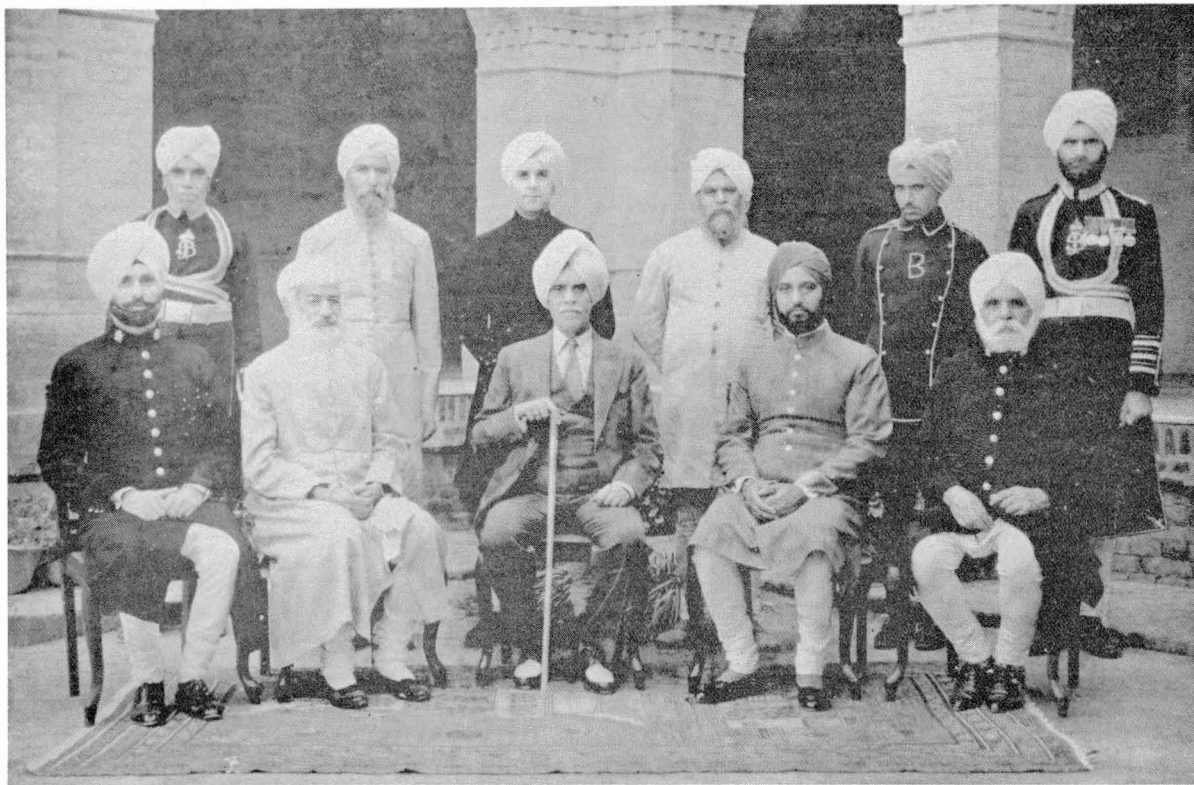




H.E. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Governor of the Punjab, at the Shrubby Bagrian House, Simla.



Col. Gurdial Singh Dhillow, The Bhai Sahib, H.H. Maharajadhiraj Yadarinda Singh,  
Tikka Ardaman Singh Bhayee, kanwar Haridhan Singh, Mohindar Bahadur of Patiala  
Standing—Col. Jaswant Singh, Capt. Bharpoor Singh



H.H. Maharaja Sir Jagatjit Singh Sahib of Kapurthala at Bagrian  
(His Holiness—His Highness—Tikka Ardaman Singh)

## CIRCLE OF LIFE

Human life begins when the spark of the individual soul is separated from the Universal Soul. It goes on adopting forms according to its deeds and actions. Until it is taken back and reabsorbed in the Universal Soul, the life and death circle goes on. The tenth Satguru has vividly described this process in the following *Kabit in Akal Ustat* :

As from one fire millions of sparks arise

ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਆਗ ਤੇ ਕਨੂਕਾ ਕੋਟ ਆਗ ਉਠੇ,

Though rising separately, they unite again in the fire;

ਨਿਆਰੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਹੁਇਕੈ ਫਿਰ ਆਗ ਮੈ ਮਿਲਾਹਿਗੇ ।

As from one heap of dust several particles of dust fill the air,

ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਧੂਰ ਤੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਧੂਰ ਪੂਰਤ ਹੈ,

And on filling it again blend with the dust;

ਧੂਰ ਕੇ ਕਨੂਕਾ ਵੇਰ ਧੂਰ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਹਿਗੇ ।

As in one stream millions of waves are produced,

ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਨਦ ਤੇ ਤਰੰਗ ਕੋਟ ਉਪਜਤ ਹੈ,

The waves being made of water all become water;

ਪਾਨ ਕੇ ਤਰੰਗ ਸਬੈ ਪਾਨ ਹੀ ਕਹਾਹਿਗੇ ।

So from God's Form nonsentient and sentient things are manifested;

ਤੈਸੇ ਬਿਸਵ ਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਭੂਤ ਭੂਤ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਇ,

And springing from Him, shall all be united in Him again.

ਤਾਹੀ ਤੇ ਉਪਜ ਸਬੈ ਤਾਹੀ ਮੈ ਸਮਾਹਿਗੇ ।

Guru Nanak Dev in *Japu* says :

According to our actions we get the next birth, but

salvation lies in Grace alone.

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥

After roaming through many ages and generations when we improve our actions, we get better life. By and by we get higher and higher and ultimately human form is bestowed upon us. This is an opportunity to soar high and attain nearness. In *Rag Sorath*, the ninth Guru says :

After passing through age upon age, I attained the human vesture.

ਫਿਰਤ ਫਿਰਤ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਜੁਗ ਹਾਰਿਓ ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹ ਲਹੀ ॥

Nanak says, this is the opportunity to realise God, then why do you not 'remember' Him.

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਤ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਕਹਾ ਨਹੀ ॥

The fifth Guru in *Maru Solhe* cautions us lest we miss this opportunity :

Out of eighty-four *lacs* of species, man is blessed with glory.

ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਸਬਾਈ ॥ ਮਾਣਸ ਕਉ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਦੀਈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥

Whosoever misses this opportunity suffers in the cycle of coming and going.

ਇਸੁ ਪਉੜੀ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਨਰੁ ਚੁਕੈ ਸੇ ਆਇ ਜਾਇ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥

He again warns in *Sri Rag* :

O man, you came to earn profit,

ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਤੂੰ ਆਇਆ ਲਾਹਾ ਲੈਣਿ ॥

but you are engaged in useless actions while the night of life is passing away.

ਲਗਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਕੁਛਕੜੇ ਸਭ ਮੁਕਦੀ ਚਲੀ ਰੈਣਿ ॥

This cycle of life and death can be successfully completed by the help, guidance, and Grace of Satguru. The adage is : First deserve then desire. To fulfil the condition to deserve, we have to work and act in such a way that it pleases the Guru and it is approved by him. This can be done by moulding our life and actions according to the teachings in the Guru *Shabd*. Still we cannot lay a claim to it. That will not be in accordance with the Satguru's teachings. This will be an indication of ego lurking in us. But we can then pray for Grace.

*Action, Karam*

In *Japu* the Satguru says :

The principles of meeting and drifting away regulate our conduct, and it is fate which counts.

ਸੰਜੋਗੁ ਵਿਜੋਗੁ ਦੁਇ ਕਾਰ ਚਲਾਵਹਿ ਲੇਖੇ ਆਵਹਿ ਭਾਗ ॥

The following line in the *Japu* also needs noting :

According to their own actions some shall attain nearness, while others shall be kept afar.

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

When both of the above lines are read together it becomes evident that it is our actions which when accumulated shape our fortune. It is, thus, our actions which count for our union and nearness or separation and drifting away from the Fountain-head of Life. Good actions and values are of two kinds, those that are active and the other passive, former could be called positive, the latter negative, that is, the acts of commission and omission. It is easy not to tell a lie, not to molest a woman, not to snatch away what is another's, not to beat or kill an innocent person and so on, and these are desirable values all right. But it requires great courage, and strong will and readiness to sacrifice and suffer for another, when you get up and challenge the aggressor who is molesting a woman or like Ahmed Shah Abdali, is carrying away girls to be sold off as slaves, or when you get hold of a person picking another's pocket, or when you volunteer to depose the truth in a court in favour of a person you know to be innocent, or when you go to help and rescue a person being beaten or mercilessly killed by a robber, and so on. In Sikhism much higher place is given to good actions, and deeds, that are active and positive, as is said in Guru Nanak's *Japu* :

There can be no worship without doing good deeds.

ਵਿਣੁ ਗੁਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

This principle of leading a life of action, an integrated whole of spiritual, intellectual, social and political activity, which aims at a progressive movement on all planes of mankind towards God-head, to be achieved not by renunciation but in *sangat* (society), was inculcated in Sikhism since its very inception. Sometimes

some people, who do not wish us well, say that Guru Nanak Dev was a man of peace and he taught only spiritual lessons and guided us in spiritual development, and that it was the sixth and then the tenth Guru, who turned the Sikhs into a militant class. Nothing could be more misleading than this. As far as peace of mind is concerned, it is an essential requirement. But it depends on the correct attitude our mind adopts by intellectual understanding (*Gian*) and knowledge of the *Gurshabd* and its interpretation in everyday life. On the political and worldly plane, peace means status quo and contentment resulting in inaction. Inaction in other words means death. But opposed to this, the living of a Sikh is a dynamic movement for emancipation and liberation.

### *Conflict, Struggle and Victory*

Struggle, therefore, becomes a part of Sikh life. As we know, it was Guru Nanak himself who set the example not only by raising a voice of protest but also even courting arrest at Saidpur during Babar's invasion. The principle of the Sikhs has, ever since, been not to bow before brute force and aggression or injustice. They do not believe in avoiding a conflict by surrender and submission. They are even ready to face and indeed welcome a conflict if it is against a bully or an oppressor of the weak. They are enjoined upon to die rather than to surrender. Sikhism thus becomes the antithesis of oppression whether spiritual, social, intellectual or political. A Sikh's mission thus becomes one of liberation and emancipation from all these and is symbolized in the sword (*Sri Sahib*). The tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh has endorsed and finalised this principle in these words :

Blest is his life in this world who repeateth God's Name  
with his tongue and meditateth on resistance in his heart.  
ਧੰਨ ਜੀਉ ਤਾਕੇ ਜਗ ਮੈ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿਤ ਮੇਂ ਜੁਧ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ।

The body is fleeting and shall not abide forever; people  
embarking the ship of fame, shall cross the ocean of the  
world.

ਦੇਹ ਅਨਿਤ ਨ ਨਿਤ ਰਹੇ ਜਸ ਨਾਵ ਚੜੈ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰ ਤਾਰੈ ।

Make this body a house of calm resignation, light thine

understanding like a lamp.

ਧੀਰਜ ਧਾਮ ਬਨਾਇ ਰਹੈ ਤਨ ਬੁਧ ਸੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਜਿਓਂ ਉਜਿਆਰੈ ।

Take the broom of Divine Knowledge into thy hands and sweep away the filth of timidity.

ਗਿਆਨ ਹਿ ਕੀ ਬਢਨੀ ਮਨੋ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ ਕਾਤਰਤਾ ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੈ ।

The conflict, the struggle, the fight, on all fronts has to be continuously, persistently and dextrously fought. A Sikh has to remain ever ready (ਤਿਆਰ ਬਰ ਤਿਆਰ) for it. We have to fulfil our duty (ਧਰਮ) towards both our Creator and His Manifestation, the creation. If in this performance any obstacle comes in the way, it has to be swept away. It was in this perspective that the sixth Satguru wore two swords of *miri* and *piri*, representing spiritual and worldly powers which were merged in the hands of the tenth Satguru into one double-edged sword called *khanda*.

As long as life lasts, the struggle must continue. Sikhism does not believe in any escape from it, and there is no place for *sanyas* (ਸੰਨਿਆਸ) in it. The tenth Master says :

When the end of life comes, let me die fighting in the thick of the battle.

ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਬਣੇ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਣ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਝੂਝ ਮਰੋਂ ।

The struggle has to be fought and won. We do not take anything lying down. The slogan given to us is 'Victory', *Fateh*. The Khalsa is of the God-Guru (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ) and so is Victory (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਿਹ)



## SEWA

*Sewa* means service. This pertains to the life we should lead in this world. This has to be a life of usefulness, of service, and assistance to others who need it.

Guru Nanak Dev says in *Sri Rag* :

Dedicate thyself to service in the world, it is then you get a seat in the Lord's Court.

ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

Bhai Gurdas also says :

Fie be upon the hands and feet that do no service; other actions are fruitless.

ਵਿਣੁ ਸੇਵਾ ਧ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਹਥ ਪੈਰ ਹੋਰ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਕਰਣੀ ।

*Sewa* can be physical, social, intellectual, mental, as well as spiritual. Service to humanity is a way to win the Creator's pleasure because the Master resides in His creation. In *Rag Parbhathi*, it is said :

The Creator is in the Created and the Created in the Creator Who is All-pervading.

ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਖਲਕ ਖਲਕ ਮਹਿ ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸ੍ਰਬ ਠਾਂਈ ॥

But to do service, we must have the capability and capacity to do it. We must, therefore, first be 'learners' and good 'earners'. If we have enough to spare, it is only then that we can give to others. *Sewa* in Sikh parlance is described under a triple head. Firstly, (ਨਮ ਜਪਣਾ, ਸਿਮਰਣ) remembering the Name, the Master. This includes also to bring around others to do the same and realise the "Presence of God" everywhere. The fourth Nanak in *Rag Gauri* says :

Nanak craves the dust of that Sikh of the Guru who himself remembers and makes others remember the Name.

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਧੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥

*Kirtan* in congregation, is another way to make everyone remember God. Offering prayers, *Ardas*, at every important step we take and before anything we do, morning and evening while eating, is also another way to remember the Master and invoke and realise His Presence. To render help to establish places of worship and keep the *maryada* going therein, is also a step in this direction. Secondly, (ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰਨਾ) to earn by hard, diligent and honest work. If we have enough, we do not look to others for help, but are in a position to help others. Under this, come both 'earning' and 'learning'. Thirdly, (ਵੰਡ ਛਕਣਾ) to share with others what we have earned and learned. We can share our learning, food, riches, comforts and other goods that we can spare. Sharing of power, under this head will be another important item. This can definitely not be done through renunciation, but is practicable only by living a successful worldly and family life.

## SANGAT, PANGAT

Then we have *sangat* and *pangat*. *Sangat* is the congregation whereunder Satguru's blessings we get together. *Pangat* means the line of diners at the community kitchen. There we get the first lesson in *sewa* when we look after the shoes of the *sangat* and offer them cold drinks, cleanse the utensils, serve food and water to the diners, who sit in a line irrespective of caste, creed, or social status. Free feeding of the needy has become an integral part of Sikhism. It is called *langar*. In short, we are enjoined upon to have enough to distribute to all who asks.

Satguru's commands are very clear in this respect :

Eat, spend, and share

ਖਾਵਹਿ ਖਰਚਹਿ ਰਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਾਈ ॥

It will not exhaust but ever grow.

ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਧਦੇ ਜਾਈ ॥

In *Sukhmani* the fifth Satguru says :

By Whose Grace thou eatest all delicacies.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਛਤੀਹ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਖਾਹਿ ॥

Bear that Master in mind.

ਤਿਸੁ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕਉ ਰਖੁ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ ॥

By Whose Grace thou appliest scent to thy body.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁਗੰਧਤ ਤਨਿ ਲਾਵਹਿ ॥

Meditate on Him and attain salvation.

ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਵਹਿ ॥

By Whose Grace thou livest in comfortable abode.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਬਸਹਿ ਸੁਖ ਮੰਦਰਿ ॥

Reflect on Him in thy mind for ever.

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਧਿਆਇ ਸਦਾ ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ॥

By Whose Grace thou enjoyest family life and comforts.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਸੰਗਿ ਸੁਖ ਬਸਨਾ ॥

Utter His Name night and day.

ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਰਸਨਾ ॥

By Whose Grace thou enjoyest love and luxuries.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਰੰਗ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ ॥

Nanak meditate on Him alone Who is worthy of worship.

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਦਾ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਧਿਆਵਨ ਜੋਗ ॥

By Whose Grace thou wearest silks.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਪਾਟ ਪਟੰਬਰ ਹਢਾਵਹਿ ॥

By Whose Grace thou hast healthful and gleaming body.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਆਰੋਗ ਕੰਚਨ ਦੇਹੀ ॥

By Whose Grace thou obtainest thy precious body.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਪਾਈ ਦੁਲਭ ਦੇਹ ॥

By Whose Grace thou ridest horses and elephants.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਅਸੁ ਹਸਤਿ ਅਸਵਾਰੀ ॥

O mind ! forget not ever that Lord.

ਮਨ ਤਿਸੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਉ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਬਿਸਾਰੀ ॥

By Whose Grace thou getest orchards, wealth and territories,

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਬਾਗ ਮਿਲਖ ਧਨਾ ॥

By Whose Grace thou hast lovely figure,

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਤੇਰਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਰੂਪੁ ॥

By Whose Grace thou obtainest glory.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਤਾਪੁ ॥

By Whose Grace all thy works are accomplished.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਪੂਰੇ ॥

Feel His Presence ever in mind.

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਜਾਨੁ ਮਨ ਸਦਾ ਹਜੂਰੇ ॥

## GRATEFULNESS

The fourth Guru has given some indications in *Var Sorath* how to share the surplus :

The food, the apparels, and the riches of those who are imbued with the love of the Lord's Name, are all consecrated.

ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਖਾਧਾ ਪੈਧਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਭੁ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਨਾਮਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਤੇ ॥

Their homes, temples, palaces, and rest-houses are all "approved" where men of God, His servants, Sikhs and mendicants take comfort.

ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਘਰ ਮੰਦਰ ਮਹਲ ਸਰਾਈ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਹਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿਖ ਅਭਿਆਗਤ ਜਾਇ ਵਰਸਾਤੇ ॥

Their horses, saddles, and felts are all consecrated on which Guru's beloved Sikhs and men of God ride.

ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਤੁਰੇ ਜੀਨ ਖੁਰਗੀਰ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਹਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਿਖ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਤ ਚੜ੍ਹਿ ਜਾਤੇ ॥

Their actions, performance of their duty, and ceremonies are all "approved" who always utter the true Name of the true Master.

ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਹਿ ਜੋ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਰਿ ਸਾਤੇ ॥

They who have treasured goodness, those beloved Sikhs of the Guru will repair to the Guru's presence.

ਜਿਨਕੈ ਪੋਤੈ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਹੈ ਸੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਹਿ ਜਾਤੇ ॥

The fifth Guru has also said in *Rag Sarang* :

That abode is blessed, their status "approved", and blessed are those who speak and hear of Him.

ਥਾਨ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਮਾਨ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਸੁਨਨ ਕਹਨਹਾਰੇ ॥

Nanak says that house is blessed where men of God reside.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਭਵਨ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਜਾਮਹਿ ਸੰਤ ਤੁਮਾਰੇ ॥

In *Sukhmani*, he says that :

Even drinking cold water is by His Grace.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਸੀਤਲ ਜਲਾ ॥

It is, thus, clear that in Sikhism all the wealth, riches, and comforts, enumerated above, are not precluded, but are for us to enjoy. The only binding condition is :

Be grateful to Him Whose bounties you enjoy.

ਜਿਸਦਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਖਾਵਣਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸਾਬਾਸਿ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮ: ੧)

In *Sukhmani*, it is explained :

By His Grace you live in comfort on the earth,

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਧਰ ਊਪਰਿ ਸੁਖਿ ਬਸਹਿ ॥

And enjoy the company of your wife and children, brothers, and friends.

ਸੁਤ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ ਮੀਤ ਬਨਿਤਾ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਸਹਿ ॥

By His Grace you are able to drink cool water,

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਸੀਤਲ ਜਲਾ ॥

And you get soothing winds blowing and priceless fire to serve you.

ਸੁਖਦਾਈ ਪਵਨੁ ਪਾਵਕੁ ਅਮੁਲਾ ॥

Whose Grace provides you different pleasures to enjoy,

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਭੋਗਹਿ ਸਭਿ ਰਸਾ ॥

and all kinds of necessities to live with.

ਸਗਲ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਬਸਾ ॥

He has given you hands, feet, ears, and tongue !

ਦੀਨੇ ਹਸਤ ਪਾਵ ਕਰਨ ਨੇਤ੍ਰ ਰਸਨਾ ॥

And yet would you leave Him who bestows these blessings and attach yourself to others.

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਅਵਰ ਸੰਗਿ ਰਚਨਾ ॥

This blind fool has fallen victim to ingratitude;

ਐਸੇ ਦੇਖ ਮੂੜ ਅੰਧ ਬਿਆਪੇ ॥

O Lord ! save him by Thy Grace.

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾਢਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਆਪੇ ॥

If we live in gratefulness to the Bestower, all these are justified to us. Gratefulness creates attachment, love, and nearness and, thus, the pleasure and blessing of the Master.

❧

## SANT, SADH, SANGAT

These words have been used in *Gurbani* very often and very often have they been misunderstood and misconstrued and sometimes exploited by clever and unscrupulous persons. It is, therefore, desirable to understand their use and interpretation in *Gurbani*.

*Sant* and *sadh* have been used in more than one sense in *bani*. Firstly, they are used with reference to flocks of sycophants, cheats, and beggars in different disguises of holy men fleecing and exploiting the unsuspecting believers with promises of relief in life here and hereafter. They roll in such ill-begotten wealth, establish palatial *ashrams*, and some of them even ride in limousines, and have the best of time. The one that can shower abusive and vulgar language, becomes more impressive, and he collects multiplied dividends. About such *sants* and *sadhs* we read in *Rag Asa* :

Who display rosaries on their necks and in their hands  
hold shining jugs,

ਗਲੀ ਜਿਨਾ ਜਪਮਾਲੀਆ ਲੋਟੇ ਹਥਿ ਨਿਬਰਾ ॥

They are not saints of the Lord, but are the cheats of  
Benars

ਓਇ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਸੰਤ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਬਾਨਾਰਸਿ ਕੇ ਠਗਾ ॥

I abhor such saints.

ਐਸੇ ਸੰਤ ਨ ਮੇ ਕਉ ਭਾਵਹਿ ॥

They devour the fruit-tree root and branch.

ਡਾਲਾ ਸਿਉ ਪੇਡਾ ਗਟਕਾਵਹਿ ॥

Some of them call themselves even 'the Satguru personified'



and are introduced as agents of the Guru, who can book berths for the faithful to the Guru's Door and secure salvation for them. The Satguru had no doubt created missionary centres and appointed preachers, but had never let loose such touts. On the other hand, history tells us that the self-appointed touts, out of the *masands* who had fallen in character, were deterrently punished.

*Sadh* and *sant* have then been used with reference to persons slightly above the normal level in spiritual advancement. These words refer also to those who soar high and achieve nearness to the Guru.

These words have mostly been used with reference to the Satguru himself such as :

I am sacrifice, yes, sacrifice am I to the vision of the  
Guru, my beloved Saint.

ਹਉ ਘੋਲੀ ਜੀਉ ਘੋਲਿ ਘੁਮਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਰਸਨ ਸੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਜੀਉ ॥ (ਮਾਝ ਮ : ੫)

On meeting the Sant Guru, the Saint of the Lord, anoint  
the face with the dust of his feet.

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਸੰਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਧੂ ਲੈ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਧੂਰਿ ਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਈ ॥ (ਮਲਾਰੂ ਮ : ੪)

Very often these words have been used to mean "the saint within us." In every individual two forces are always in conflict, the saint and the sinner. These are inherent in our nature. The touch of the Guru subdues the sinner and upholds the saint in us. For instance in *Rag Majh* the fifth Nanak says :

When our good luck developed, the Guru got the saint in  
us to meet and function.

ਭਾਗੁ ਹੋਆ ਗੁਰਿ ਸੰਤੁ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ॥

Obviously, the word *sant* here refers to the saint in us. In other words, it means that when the Guru puts his divine hand on our head and takes us into his protection, the Godly and saintly virtues in us are energized and the devilish tendencies are beaten down.

*Sangat* does not mean the company of any hypocritical, pretensions, individual masquerading as a spiritual wizard. It definitely means the *sangat* of the Satguru. We recite daily during our evening prayers the fourth Nanak's *Shabd* in *Rag Gujri* in which this is clearly defined as :

Fie be on them and their living who have not sought the protection and refuge in the Guru's company.

ਜੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਰਣਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਏ ਧ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਜੀਵੇ ਧ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਜੀਵਾਸਿ ॥

Those men-of-God who have taken to the Satguru's *sangat* are blessed for eternity.

ਜਿਨ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ ਤਿਨ ਧੁਰਿ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਲਿਖਾਸਿ ॥

Nowadays the Guruship having been entrusted to the Khalsa under the Spiritual Leadership of *Gurshabd*, it comes to mean the assembly of people where the Khalsa is functioning under the Presidentship of the *Shabd* and *Gurbani* is being implemented.

## WORLDLY LIFE

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Sikhism is a way of life in which we have to fulfil our duties both towards the Creator and His creation, His manifestation, where He has been pleased to send us. Individual spiritual efforts, developments and attainments had been there already prior to Sikhism. But the people were divided into two main groups; one monopolized the spiritual side while the other, bereft of religious and spiritual content, was occupied only with worldly, material living. Sikhism brought both these factors together and expected these to work as two wheels of the same chariot. The chariot could reach its destination only if both the wheels were functioning. Sikhism, therefore, laid down two main principles of *simran* and *sewa*. *Simran* has been discussed elsewhere. *Sewa* means service, which means action. The Sikh life, therefore, consists of activity in doing good to others. For this purpose, building of character of the individual was of foremost importance. Indoctrination and regimentation and other such doctrines are great obstacles in this path. They put an unyielding cap on individual effort, incentive, intelligence, interest, and character. They suffocate individuality and personality. There are no shortcuts in Sikhism such as *mantras* or miracles. But the individual has to develop the best in him. This development has to be based on *simran* through which both God and Guru fill the individual. This generates Godly virtues, and vigour in Sikh. This incorporation of the Guru in the Sikh links him up with an inexhaustible source of power. Sikhism proceeds like a caravan. In a march like this, quick decisions have to be taken and every member of the caravan is to be carried along.

Satguru provides intellectual foresight and has created the institution of *sangat*, the Sikh congregational assembly. When the *Sidhs* asked Guru Nanak Dev to perform some miracles or show them his power with which he was going to spread his message, the Satguru replied that he depended only upon *Shabad* and *sangat*. There is no other way. The practice of the Name besides being done in solitude, when worshipped in the form of congregational recitation or singing becomes more impressive and effective. It may not be necessary in the case of an individualistic religion but where religion consists in realising God mainly through service done in the world, it is not possible to do so without an organised *sangat*. The idea of *sangat* led to the establishment of local assemblies. Every Sikh was supposed to be a member of one or other of such *sangats*. The Guru, of course, was the central unifying factor. The *sangats* acquired awe and sanctity because of the belief that the Guru lived and moved among them.



## ORGANISATION

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For this purpose, therefore, organisation became necessary. This organisation began at the very beginning of Sikhism. Sikhism broke with ascetic traditions from the very start. Guru Nanak Dev during his long travels, wherever he went established a *sangat* with an injunction to build a place where they could meet and sing the Guru's *Shabds*. This place used to be called a *dharamsala*, later on a gurdwara. This network of Sikh *dharamsalas* sprang up everywhere in the country. We find such centres of the Satguru's mission established in Kabul, Kashmir, Baghdad, Jalalabad, Kathmandu, Kamrup, Junagarh, Surat, Cuttak, Nanak Matta, Johar (near Sobathu), Colombo, Rameshwaram, Madras, Sutur, Kanjaliban, Adilabad, Mirzapur, Chittagong, Dubri, Decca, and many other places. Each *sangat* was under the charge of a Sikh appointed by the Guru. These were called *manjis*. *Manji* means a cot whereon a Sikh in charge sat when preaching. Bhai Lalo was the first to be appointed to preach in the North, and Sheikh Sajjan in the South West of Punjab. A large number of such workers were scattered over the whole place visited by Guru Nanak, in and outside India. There was Gopal Dass in Banaras, Jhanda Badhi in Bushair, Buddan Shah in Kiratpur, Mahi in Maisar, a priest's son Kalyug, at Jagannathpuri, Devlut in Lushai (Tibet), Sals Rai in Patna and Bihar, Raja Shivnabh in Ceylon, Sheikh Balol at Baghdad.

After Guru Nanak the missionary work developed and became more regular, though the sphere of activity narrowed down. There were twenty-two *manjis*, (sort of diocese), in the third Guru's time and fifty-two *pirrey*, (sort of parishes) by the time of the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun. Each district was put under a *masand*. His

duty was to preach religion and to be responsible to the Guru for the *sangat* in his diocese. On Vaisakhi day, he used to visit the Guru along with the Sikhs of his *ilaka* (area) and report on the work he did and account for the offerings received. Gradually, the congregations gathering around the Guru acquired great sanctity. Ultimately, the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, transferred the whole authority to the *sangat* when the Guruship was entrusted to the Five Beloved Ones under the supremacy of the *Gurshabd*. It was said "One disciple is a single Sikh; two form a *sangat*; but where there are five there is God Himself." When the devolution of full powers came, the Khalsa stood out as the embodiment of the Guru. Since then the system of forming a body of Five Beloved Ones for disposal of any executive work, settling a dispute or taking any decision was evolved. Matters of *Panthic* interest were discussed at the Akal Takht and the others were settled in local *sangats*. No person high or low was above their jurisdiction; even the tenth Guru himself was once hauled up for saluting with his arrow the tomb of a saint, which he had, of course, done to test the adherence of his Sikhs to *Gurshabd*. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was also called up at the Akal Takht for a dereliction and was punished.

This self-contained system of organisation of the Sikhs turned the Muslim Government and Hindu Rajas against them. It was this organisation that saved them in the period of persecution when a price was put on a Sikh's head and to grow long hair was declared a crime and the Sikhs were searched and hunted everywhere, when they had to repair to Rajputana deserts or the forests in the Northern Punjab and foot hills of the *Shivaliks* (1716-1763). The words in *Ardas* invoking His Grace and indulgence for all the bodies of the Khalsa wherever they are, is still a pathetic reminder of that time, besides a reference to the present-day Sikhs spread out all over the world. At about the same time, thus, the Khalsa came into its own and could function directly everywhere in all spheres of life as the embodiment of the Guru, the institution of the *masands* was abolished.

Thus, the *Panth* became a living organism guided by common sense and the ever lasting and dynamic presence of the Guru.

FAMILY LIFE

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Whereas a Sikh is to advance and progress towards God-head while discharging his duties towards his fellow beings, he cannot achieve the goal by renunciation but he can do so only in *sangat*, or society. Celibacy has not at all, therefore, been applauded in Sikhism. When Sikhism was founded 500 years ago, people who renounced their hearth and home were looked up to with reverence. It was preached to the people that no one could attain to spiritual heights so long as he did not give up his family life and repair to the wilderness, and no one could perform any religious duty except those belonging to the priestly class. In Sikhism, all these ideas were discarded. A family man was declared by the Guru as much nobler, and more righteous than the one who had given up his own family and home, and had become a burden on others. The Gurus set the example themselves by taking to family life and doing all worldly duties. Even today some schools of thought applaud celibates and hermits. But in Sikhism, there is no special place or position for them. Rather, they are generally considered to be drones and parasites.

Love of progeny and urge to bring up, look after, and protect the offspring is a natural instinct in all living beings. The idea of a family originated after the human beings progressed from their wild life. The idea of family life gave rise to mutual attachment and close affinity, the shape of which has varied in different periods and in different countries. So the form of marriage has differed. The Hindu law givers, Manu and other *Rishis*, have referred to eight different forms of marriage amongst the Hindus. They are

Brahm, Daiv, Arsh, Prajapat, Asur, Gandharv, Rakshas, and Paisach. Amongst the Muslims, there is generally one kind of marriage ceremony which is called *Niqah* while there are three kinds of divorces which only the husband can announce and which the wife is not entitled to do. There is another sort of marriage also justified for them which is for a specific period. For instance, if a person goes to a far off land, he marries a woman there and divorces her when going back. It is very much like hiring a wife on landing and firing her when taking off. Except in Christianity, where a person can have only one wife and a woman only one husband at a time, amongst Hindus and Mohammedans, there has been no ceiling on the number of wives and in certain hill tribes there has been no ceiling on the number of husbands. Great men, both spiritual preceptors and rulers, have been keeping numerous wives and mistresses. But womenfolk were not generally allowed to have more than one husband, though sometimes exceptions are noticed as was the case of five Pandavs having one consort. Nowadays, there is a general tendency to limit the numbers on both sides to one.

The custom amongst the Sikhs has also not been very different. The Sikh outlook and ideal of morality is generally given in the *Shabds* that are sung and recited at the Sikh Anand Marriage ceremony. This is contained in a sample of wedding sermon delivered by me on the occasion of the marriage of the Faridkot Princess on December 14, 1959. Excerpts from that sermon are given below :

Anybody can perform any ceremony. This honour has been given to me because of my very old connections with Sikhism which date back to the beginning of the seventeenth century, when appreciating his devotion, service, and loyalty, the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib initiated my ancestor, Bhai Rup Chand, into Sikhism, gave him the highest honour by declaring him as his brother (Bhai), and entrusted him with the sacred mission of preaching Sikhism. Bhai Rup Chand had the unique privilege and honour to perform the first Anand Marriage when he was chosen to officiate at the wedding of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib.



The ties between the noble and great Brar family of the bride and mine are also centuries old and have bound our families closely. Brars also first came into the fold of Sikhism at Bhai Rup Chand's instance.

All the Sikh ceremonies are very simple. They are based primarily on the principle :

Set fire to such rituals and ceremonies that lead me away from my Beloved.

ਜਾਲਦੇ ਐਸੀ ਰੀਤਿ ਜਿਤੁ ਮੈ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਵੀਸਰੈ ॥

The ceremony of marriage is also very simple. It consists of prayer and vow. All ceremonies, in fact, whether of joy or of sorrow, begin and end with prayer. As the Guru has said :

Whenever there is any work on hand, address God about it.

ਕੀਤਾ ਲੋੜੀਐ ਕੰਮੁ ਸੁ ਹਰਿ ਪਹਿ ਆਖੀਐ ॥

Sikhism is not a way of renunciation. For our salvation, realisation of truth, for attainment of and to find God, we do not have to give up our homes and hearths and wander in woods and wilderness to seek the Omnipresent, the Universal Soul and the Source of all existence, Who pervades in us all and in Whom we all exist, Who is also the Ultimate Cause and the Ultimate End of all. The Guru says :

Why go and seek Him in the woods; the Omnipresent and Eternal Pure is inseparably within you.

ਕਾਹੇ ਰੇ ਬਨ ਖੋਜਨ ਜਾਈ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਅਲੇਪਾ ਤੇਹੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

The comforts and pleasures of the world are worth enjoying. Satguru has brought the much dreaded *maya* to our feet and turned it into a useful instrument of service. The only thing is that we must not ourselves become its slaves. In *Sukhmani*, the Psalm of Peace of Guru Arjun Dev, the Satguru has enjoined that while enjoying dainty dishes, anointing our bodies with perfumes, living in comfortable houses and cosy beds happily with our families, wearing jewels, silks and satins, riding horses and elephants (and now cars and aeroplanes), bear always the Supreme Lord in mind and sing His praises in gratefulness for His Great Bounties, His Mercy, and His Grace. Even while drinking pure clear water, thank

Him, for there are many who are not fortunate enough even to receive this Grace of His.

Gratefully thank the Great Giver.

ਜਿਸਦਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਖਾਵਣਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸਾਥਾਸਿ ॥

We have to live such a life that when we ultimately face the Master, we do so with an untarnished and bright face and a clear conscience.

In Sikhism, therefore, the family way of life *Grihasth Ashram* is the superior and natural way of life, in which we have to live like a lotus and the swan, unaffected by the turbulent tides and waves of the waters, yet living and enjoying in it.

There are four stages in the progress of man towards his union with the Lord. They are, fear, love, restraint, and harmony. The Satguru wishes that our married life should also be moulded on the ideal laid down for our union with the *Paramatma*.

Our conjugal relations are designed not merely to promote worldly comfort or to perpetuate the human race, but to provide the best means of approaching God and cultivating our lives in such a manner as to make them most useful and fruitful. Marriage is not a mere contract, to be repudiated at will, but is a sacrament, a holy union consecrated in accordance with the Divine Will.

We invoke *Akal Purkh's* (Eternal Person's) presence by holding a holy congregation, with Guru Granth Sahib in our midst as *Sakhi*. This holy *sangat* incorporates the presence of the Almighty, as Satguru has said:

God resides in the *sangat*.

ਵਿਚਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਵਸੈ ਜੀਉ ॥

The bride and the bridegroom are sitting in the lap of God, the source of all love and affection, and the blessings of the whole congregation are with them. As they move round the Holy Granth, they should do so with a feeling and faith that they are walking the course of joint life to make themselves inseparably one, to make their united life a present to the Master. The aim of married life is union which is not physical union only but a union, physical, intellectual, and spiritual. The Guru's own words are :

They are not to be called husband and wife who only sit

together; rather they are husband and wife who have one spirit in two bodies.

ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਬਹਿਨਿ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਏਕ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਕਰੀਐ ਸੋਇ ॥

This life of union has also four stages of development. One is of fear, the other of love, the next of restraint, and the last of harmony or perfect at oneness.

The first is of fear. This might sound strange to those who have been feeding themselves on Western literature and foreign thought. In the West love comes first and then marriage. Why ? It all depends on the psychological developments of different people. In the West, the spring season is celebrated in May, when summer has already begun here. With us spring or *basant* begins in February, when we are still shivering with cold. And yet we celebrate the spring when the branches of trees are still naked and flowers have not yet come. We celebrate our spring in anticipation of the coming flowers. So we celebrate our marriage on the promise and anticipation of love, which when it comes gradually out of mutual contact and understanding, exchange of thoughts and feelings, and opportunities to serve each other more and more, is always deep-rooted and everlasting. But before love comes, there is a stage of fear, not slavish fear, but "*Nirmal Bhao*", holy fear, which dispels all fear, and it is the fear of the unknown around the corner. It also means discipline.

Those who fear the Lord have nothing else to fear; but those who do not fear Him have much fear in store for them.

ਜਿਨਾ ਭਉ ਤਿਨ ਨਾਹਿ ਭਉ, ਮੁਚੁ ਭਉ ਨਿਭਵਿਆਹ ॥

Both the husband and wife are to tread gently towards each other, in awe of each other, but not being afraid of each other. Love is a delicate thing. It may get injured by the slightest departure from truth or sincerity. The least adverse reference to one's parents might wound feelings. It is a great art, as difficult and delicate as life itself to make a strange and unknown individual to feel at home with new people and a new environment, with new elders and new relations. Great sensitivity, loving tact, and patient sympathy are

required to make two strange lives fuse into one. This moral sensitiveness, this accommodating sympathy is called fear by the Guru.

Out of this grows anticipatory pleasure, which is the next stage. The word for this used by the Guru is *chao* (ਚਾਉ), which means enthusiasm, eagerness tinged with hope and optimistic pleasure. For, what is that love which has no enthusiasm, no yearning in it ? Usually enthusiasm in marriage wears off in a few years, and then everything appears stale and monotonous. How to keep up enthusiasm in married life, is the problem in question. Nobody can maintain youth and beauty for ever. Age and illness invade our lives, and with the wearing off of freshness our attachments also grow stale and drab. Then how to keep up freshness ? The Creator knew what sort of man He was creating. He knew that he could not retain the outer appearance forever. He, therefore, provided an element in his nature which would keep up freshness of relationship, even though youth and beauty might depart. This element was love, which knows no staleness, no growing old. Is not God the oldest being, more old and antiquated than any man or woman could be ? And yet His lovers say :

My Lord is ever new and fresh.

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਿਤ ਨਵਾ ॥

The secret of keeping the relation young and fresh is not in cosmetics or lipstick, but love, unchanging love, love in all conditions, all troubles, and all diseases. Troubles are a nuisance. But to a loving heart, they provide opportunities for service and sacrifice and are, therefore, conducive to love.

Next comes the third stage. The words in the *Lavan* are :

Love comes into the heart which withdraws itself from all other affections.

ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ ਭਇਆ ਬੈਰਾਗੀਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

The affections of the parents, of brothers and sisters, friends and companions, give place to one overmastering love that knows no rival. Just a few minutes ago, the bride owned so much in her parental home. Now after this ceremony she will have to withdraw from it. All her relations will become strangers and their sweetness

will fade, in comparison with the supreme sweetness of the new relation :

When all relations appeared imperfect, I sought thy hand.

ਹਭੇ ਸਾਕ ਕੂੜਾਵੇ ਡਿਠੇ ਤਉ ਪਲੈ ਤੈਭੈ ਲਾਗੀ ॥

But she looks forward, with complacent joy and new *chao*, towards the new life with the protector of her life and honour, of whom she could be proud. But this *chao* is *bairagiya* (ਬੈਰਾਗੀਆ), full of *vairag* or sadness. Her lips are smiling, but her eyes are full of tears. This is the happiest occasion of her life, but also the saddest. It gives her a new home, but it also plucks her out of her old moorings. The last line of *lavan* mentions only the *vairag* stage, which is an essential stage. It can also be called the "transition" stage. In the beginning love is immediate and compelling, and can stand no separation or absence. But constant association and understanding develop restraint and self-control, that make affections sedate and calm. Then absence is no absence. This is *vairag*.

Last of all comes the stage of *sehaj*, which is of complete oneness, of perfect balance, which knows no separation, no mistrust. This is the stage in which effort is eliminated. The bride's past and present become the bridegroom's past and present. Her parents become his and his become hers. They feel and think alike and both are completely identified with each other; that is, they become "*Ek jot doe murati*", one spirit in two bodies.

This is so far as the present social outlook and custom is concerned. It takes pretty long to change, but such social customs always change. The form of marriage and the concept of morality have changed and have been different in different countries, and in different circumstances. And this will, of course, keep on changing. The concept of marriage is quite different in the West from the East even at this moment. In the West, men and women are more free between themselves and society does not mind. In some countries pornography is socially and officially allowed. Recently, homosexuality has been excluded from the list of objectionable acts in the Penal Code, whereas previously it was considered to be a crime. A current member of the British Parliament who is an

unmarried woman has given birth to a child and has refused to disclose the name of the father of the child. And she is there elected by popular vote. A cinema actress in America has bypassed the Christian edict of monogamy by living with two men at a time without marrying them. The brewing revolt against the authority of the male and bondage of marriage in the West is indicated somewhat in these words :

“In primitive times, of course, the heavier musculature of the man was necessary to protect the pregnant female and the immobile young.

“The female brain is not a vestigial organ, like a vermiform appendix.

“Marriage as an institution, is as thoroughly corrupt as prostitution. It is, in fact, legalized and romanticised prostitution. A woman who marries, is selling her sexual services and domestic services for permanent bed and board. There is no human being a man can buy, any more, except a woman.

“Domination of the insubordinate female is an almost instinctive male reflex. We all live in a patriarchy, where men govern women by playing sexual politics. They bought and sold women like cattle. Bound their feet at birth to deform them, so they could not run away like in China. Made widows throw themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands like in India. Cut off their clitorises so they could bear children but not enjoy sex. Clitoris is the only sexual organ, in either sex, designed by nature solely for sexual pleasure.”

These ideas may astound us in the East, especially in India, but the infection is already in the air, and has been set in motion. The system of divorce which was unheard of in Hindu society has been introduced. And this has been done by a Brahmin Prime Minister, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. The efforts nowadays to control the increasing population by justifying abortion; and teaching and training to use contraceptives, are removing the fear of pregnancy, the only practical check to adultery. The change in the Hindu Succession Act has further divided the Hindu society and the female sentiments. All these are, in a way, preludes to the

coming infection from the West. With emergence of such formulas as nexus, plexus, and sexus — meaning “a connection”, “a complex of erotic nerves”, and “the resultant orgasm” and freedom for propagation and exhibition of pornography, and increasing tendency towards nudity and semi-nudeness, decontrol on rigidity and decreasing discipline on morality, acceptance by society of free mixing of men and women, and tolerance of free-lancing, and increasing pastime of sowing wild oats, lessening and demoralization of sanctity of wedlock, no wonder the society is heading back to the jungle and Stone Age, thus, perhaps completing the circle of civilisation and life on earth.

This is one aspect of life; otherwise too we see the world has started behaving in a way which is even worse than the so-called “jungle life”. People then settled their scores themselves direct in a frontal way. But now to get scores settled according to one’s dictates, third parties, who are innocent and unconcerned, are being tortured and massacred. People against whom there is no grievance and who are unarmed are being kidnapped and held to ransom and planes are hijacked to collect money and to have demands fulfilled. Electricity, transport and other necessities of life are being cut off to coerce the public to pressurise the government to get wages increased. Public and private property is being destroyed to get some thing done somewhere. To get through examinations students resort to strikes and teachers stop work to get their demands fulfilled. Without any rhyme or reason, people are being clandestinely expelled and their property, belongings confiscated. Science and technology were expected to do good to humanity and better the standards, but have only provided human beings with instruments of destruction and devastation. The indicators of civilization were supposed to be social and ethical advancement. But they are disappearing altogether. With our various sorts of explosions, we have even disturbed nature vis-a-vis which harmony should be maintained. Nature has never tolerated encroaching. This we have forgotten. Very likely, civilization has crossed the zenith and is now coming down headlong, beating a retreat.

There are no special injunctions in Sikhism about the number of children. It should depend on need, circumstances and one's capacity to bring them up. There was a time when Aryans invaded India and settled down here. They naturally wanted to increase their numbers as much as possible to make their hold of the country pukka. Procreation in any and every way was encouraged and justified. A male issue was declared to be a religious necessity. The last rites of a dead person were invariably to be performed by the male issue. If Raja Vachittar Vir, in spite of having two wives, Ambika and Ambalika, could not produce an issue, he had to seek help of Rishi Vyas. Dhritrashtra and Pandu, of the Mahabharata fame, were thus fathered by Vyas. *Rishis* at that time generally carried long knots of hair, big beards, and almost naked hairy bodies besmeared with ashes. They had potent awe-inspiring images. It is said that when Vyas stepped on Rani Ambika's bed, out of fear, she closed her eyes. It was, thus, that she gave birth to Dhritrashtra as a blind child. Similarly, when the Rishi went to the other Rani, she paled with fear. Her issue was thus as pale as Pandu clay and was called Pandu. The five sons of Pandu were also issues brought about in the same way. Now the position has changed. Human population has begun to almost overflow. Now the requirement will naturally be to slowdown. So acceleration or slowing down of the rate of birth does not contravene any religious or spiritual edict.



WOMEN AMONG THE SIKHS

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Before Sikhism came on the scene, the womenfolk in India were considered to be almost on the same level as the low castes. Sometimes they were even called *chandals*. They were generally treated as robots to serve the males, cook food, wash clothes, sweep the house, and do other household jobs. Besides, in many parts of the country, males are seen comfortably sitting in groups smoking *hukah* or playing cards or just basking in the sunshine, while the females are working in the fields and doing all sorts of odd jobs and still carrying their little ones on their hips. The males used them for satisfying their passions and to breed, nourish, and nurse their offsprings. Women had not been considered to be fit to perform any religious or social ceremonies. A man could have as many wives and mistresses as he liked but a woman having connections with more than one man was not tolerated. We have been reading of women being burnt alive on their husbands' pyres and called *satis*; but no man having been so burnt has ever been heard of. Even now in some form or another, the system of offering Hindu girls to the deity in the temples persists. They are called *Dev-Dasis*. One is astonished to see the male *Devatas*, when routed by demons, rushing, crying and bewailing to the female *Devi*, Durga, for help and protection which was readily extended and *Devatas* restored their territory. Yet the males still decried the females and denied them a proper status.

Even amongst the Mohammedans, it is observed that females cannot stand in the same line with men when the prayer, *Namaz*, is offered at the mosque. It is the male only who is entitled to give divorce to the female. Individual females had shown a very high

standard of character sometimes, but they had been denied any honourable status as a class.

It was Guru Nanak, who first took up seriously and effectively the cause of the female folk. In *Asa di Var*, Guru Nanak Dev has devoted a full stave to express his views against those who always run down the female class. The stave in the 19th stanza runs :

It is by woman, the condemned one, that we are conceived, and from her that we are born; it is with her that we are betrothed and married.

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥

It is woman we befriend, and she who keeps the race going.

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥

When one woman dies, another is sought for; and it is with her that we get established in society.

ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ ॥

Why should we decry her from whom great men are born.

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥

It is also from woman that women are born; there is nobody who is not born of woman.

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਊਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

Nanak, it is only the One Unborn God Who is independent of a woman.

ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥

In Sikhism, women as a whole, are given equal status with the menfolk. They are entitled to perform all the social and religious ceremonies and rituals. They can lead in the prayers and enter freely the innermost sanctuaries of the Sikh places of worship and take part in social gatherings and religious congregations. They are regarded as the second wheel of the chariot of life which can be taken to its destiny if both the wheels are functioning together. Sikh history tells us that after Guru Gobind Singh, the writ was being issued to the *Panth* by Mata Sundar Kaur from Delhi for several years. Even in the guerilla warfare which the Sikhs fought with the Mughal rulers and their Hindu stooges for more than 50 years, Sikh women took a very active and important part. They have even been leading the Sikh armies in the battlefield.

## INTEGRATION

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By completely repudiating Varanashram, the Satguru brought about the integration of different castes into a casteless society. We find that the Five Beloved Ones to whom the leadership was passed on by the tenth Satguru, came from five different castes. Daya Ram was a Khatri, Dharam Dass a Jat, Mohkam Chand a Calicoprinter, and Sahib Chand a barbar, while Himat Rai was a water-carrier. This integration caused a flutter and a lot of opposition amongst the Hindus, especially the Hill Rajas around Anandpur. When invited by the tenth Guru to join him in uprooting the bigotted and tyrannous Mughal Rulers and save their *dharam*, these Hill Rajas rejected the offer and refused to join the Guru mostly on this very account that he had brought the low castes to the level of the higher ones.

This step also shows that for the first time in Indian history, the whole country was brought together and integrated as a result of Guru Nanak's preaching of universal brotherhood. We find that these five *pyaras* came from five different quarters of India, thus, dividing the country into five zones. Daya Ram came from Lahore in the north, Dharam Dass from Delhi in the centre, and Mokham Chand from Dwarka in the west, while Sahib Chand hailed from Bidar in the south, and Himat Rai from Jagannathpuri in the east.

The integration of different castes was brought about in this way. But to bring about a classless society is not a practical proposition. Even if given the same opportunities and facilities, the individual intellect will stand out. Individual intelligence, urge, disposition and stamina are always a personal matter. It is not

possible to bring them down to the same level everywhere. In every institute, there is equal teaching by the same teacher and equal facilities are provided, but still the individual effort and intelligence shine out. Communist countries were considered to have worked to bring about classlessness. But even there, the leadership and power is in the hands of those few who have a capacity and capability to lead. If the promising intellect is not helped and encouraged to progress and advance, and a ceiling is put on intelligence and merit is snubbed to bring about equalization, it will be a bad day for the nation and the country will be doomed to serfdom again. Then we have a *Karma* theory. As long as this stands unchallenged and is not replaced by some other alternative, no two persons are likely to have done the same *Karma*. The result differs according to the *Karma*. It is our *Karma*, i.e., action according to which we attain nearness or go astray and drift away. Guru Nanak in *Japji* says :

According to their own actions some shall attain nearness,  
while others shall be thrown away.

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

The fifth Guru has also said :

As we sow, so shall we reap in the field depending on  
*Karma*.

ਜੇਹਾ ਬੀਜੈ ਸੋ ਲੁਣੈ ਕਰਮਾ ਸੰਦੜਾ ਖੇਤੁ ॥

This contention has recently been supported by an American thinker, Harvard Professor, Richard Herrnstein (reference *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, dated August 27, 1971).

“He says : ‘Within a few generations, Americans will be ruled and exploited by a small caste of families with innate and inherited supreme intelligence.’

“He bases his statement of a ‘meritocracy’ on the theory that intelligence, contrary to opinion held to date, is 80% innate and inherited and only 20% the result of education and environment.

“Prof. Herrnstein has warned against the idea that equal educational opportunities for all classes of society, together with increasing social mobilities will create a classless society.

“He believes that biological intelligence barriers will lead

to a privileged aristocracy. He holds that already the American ruling class today displays an above average intelligence quotient, whereas the lower class is well below the average level.”

The solution, that the Satguru provides is that, it is ego which is dangerous. He took steps to obliterate it. Amongst the Sikhs the slogan is :

The ration is that of the Guru and the service is that of the Sikhs.

ਦਾਣਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਟਹਿਲ ਮੇਵਾ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਕੀ ।

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## VARANASHRAM

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Varanashram is the mainstay of Hinduism. Under this principle, Indians were divided into four classes, viz., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The Brahmins monopolized all the intellect and were regarded as the "Head" of the Hindus. The Kshatriyas were the "sword arm" of the Hindus. The Vaishyas were artisans and farmers and technicians. While the Shudras were meant for service and menial work. Whatever may have been the origin of this principle, it put the masses into four watertight insulated compartments. The power and pelf were all monopolized and concentrated in the hands of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Even amongst them, the Brahmin was the supreme director, wire-puller and king-maker; while Kshatriyas were functioning as their instruments. All the learning and consequent wisdom, as well as political wire-pulling and ultimate effective political influence was conserved in the hands of the Brahmins along with their religious (*Dharmik*) monopoly. All the three classes were so suppressed and oppressed by the Brahmin class with their threats of disaster, and ritual beliefs, and with the fear of suffering hereafter that they looked up to them for their relief in this world as well as the next. The best of everything they earned and produced was first presented and offered to the Brahmins. This pampered class having the powerful strong arm of the Kshatriyas at their service, treated the other two lower classes with such harsh and humiliating behaviour that it created hell for them. The Kashatriya rulers were popped up and made to appear to the helpless people as representatives of the Divinity, above suspicion and criticism, as if they could do no

wrong. The people were so obsessed and depressed that they accepted all this high-handedness, cruelty, and exploitation with abject surrender. In short, the result of all this was that all the four classes were so permanently set apart that they lost all sympathy or co-operation or any sense of neighbourliness with each other. The schism created by these class divisions was ultimately responsible for the slavery of the country. A divided house could not stand up against the onslaught of any invader. A greater tragedy was that people were branded and condemned to their class compartment not by any merit or their calling or profession, but merely by chance or fluke of their birth. Guru Nanak Dev in the very beginning struck at the very root of this principle, when he took along with him as his companion, Mardana, who came from the low caste of *Mirasis* and Bala, a farmer (*Jat*), and preferred the food of Bhai Lalo, a poor carpenter to that of a sumptuous repast of the wealthy Malik Bhago. The third Guru got a *Baoli*, a deep well approachable by 84 steps, constructed at Goindwal in 1559. Every visitor bathed in it and rubbed shoulders with all without consideration of caste, class, creed, or colour.

We find that the institution of *langar* in the third Guru's time attained a special greatness and fame. About this *langar*, there is a reference in *Var Ramkali* by Balwand and Satta as follows :

In the *langar* along with the wealth of *Gurshabd*, was distributed freely the nectar-sweet rice-food mixed with pure *ghee* and milk.

ਲੰਗਰਿ ਦਊਲਤਿ ਵੰਡੀਐ ਰਸੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਖੀਰਿ ਘ੍ਰਿਅਾਲੀ ॥

Every visitor, whether Hindu or Muslim, was asked to partake of food in the same mess, in the same *pangat*, before he could see the Guru. When Emperor Akbar came to see the Satguru, on hearing about this protocol (ਮਰਿਆਦਾ), he and the Raja of Haripur also sat in line in the *langar* and took food before he met the Guru.

During the fourth and fifth Satgurus' time, pools (ਸਰੋਵਰ) were dug and filled with clean water for everybody to bathe. It should be noted that one of these *Sarovars* (Kaulsar) is named after one of the sixth Guru's Muslim lady disciples, Bibi Kaulan.

Finally, this principle of Varanashram was obliterated by the tenth Satguru when he administered *amrit* from the same iron bowl (ਬਾਟਾ) to everyone high or low, rich or poor, the high caste or the so-called untouchable; and made them eat *Karah Parshad* out of the same dish.

Satguru has blended the four *Varanas* into one individual Sikh, who is an integral, integrated, perfect whole. When he reads the Scriptures, recites *Gurbani*, leads in prayer, delivers a sermon, preaches in *sangat*, performs religious rights and social ceremonies, he is a Brahmin; when he wields the sword, fights battles, jumps to the help of the helpless, and defends his family, hearth and home, *dharam* and country, he is a Kshatriya; when he tills the land, does a draftman's job, and runs a mechanic's garage, or rides a tractor, he is a Vaishya; and when he cleans the dirty utensils of the *langar*, dusts off the shoes of the *sangat*, sweeps the house and the gurdwara compound, takes the farmyard manure on his head to the field, and does other service wherever needed, that very Sikh is a Shudra too. And when he emits fragrance of his 'Sikh Life' and provides light and guidance to the others, he becomes a missionary. Bhai Gurdas says :

All the four *varanas* were blended into one.

ਚਾਰਿ ਵਰਣ ਇਕ ਵਰਣ ਕਰਾਇਆ ।

The principle of Varanashram could not possibly stand against the two main principles of Sikhism given by the Satguru, of Fatherhood of One God and resultant brotherhood of man as sons and daughters of the same Father. In our scripture, it is clearly laid down in *Rag Parbhaati* :

The whole universe is the manifestation of the One Sole Light; then whom to call good and whom bad.

ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੋ ਮੰਦੇ ॥

In *Rag Sarang*, the Satguru has said :

Reflecting on the Guru's Word, I am rid of the sense of any colour, caste, and tribe.

ਜਾਤਿ ਬਰਨ ਕੁਲ ਸਹਸਾ ਚੂਕਾ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ॥ (ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮ : ੧)



## RENUNCIATION

Renunciation is an important factor to turn our thinking and actions in the right direction. Without renunciation our thoughts and actions are prone to be self-oriented, and selfish. Whatever the origin, the shape it adopted, at the time when Sikhism was founded, renunciation just meant giving up of one's hearths and home, family and responsibilities. Sikhism is against this idea. It regards such a step as an expression of human weakness and cowardice. It preaches that every living thing is a manifestation of the Supreme Being who resides in us and can be realised while performing our worldly duties as well. In *Rag Dhanasri*, the ninth Nanak says :

Why repair to the wilderness to seek Him;

ਕਾਹੇ ਰੇ ਬਨ ਖੋਜਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

The Omnipresent, the Detached, is always within Thee.

ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਅਲੇਖਾ ਤੋਹੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

As fragrance is in flower and reflection in mirror :

ਪੁਹਪ ਮਧਿ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਛਾਈ ॥

So He is within thee; seek Him within.

ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਸੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਖੋਜਹੁ ਭਾਈ ॥

The purpose of the Sikh life is service, *sewa*, which cannot be fulfilled by such kind of renunciation. A person who has taken to such renunciation will, on the other hand, look upon and expect others to serve him, being entirely dependent on others.

Sikhism advocates renunciation, but of such things as, desire for ownership with regard to all objects and activities, that is, attachment for all these. It preaches renunciation of ego and pride,

and of idleness, indolence, inertia and inactivity. The fifth Satguru in *Rag Maru* says :

Renunciation is noble if lust, anger, and greed are renounced.

ਤਿਆਗਨਾ ਤਿਆਗਨੁ ਨੀਕਾ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਤਿਆਗਨਾ ॥

If not properly studied and understood, mere reading of *Gurbani* takes us to the brink from where we observe the total insignificance and helplessness of the human being before the Infinite, Fathomless Almighty. From this point of the cross-roads, one is liable to take the easier route and become a fatalist. But Sikhism takes the other route which lifts one higher in values and virtues. For a Sikh, the arena of action begins from this point. Being emancipated from all terrors of superstitious dogmas or of the priest or the ruler and above all the fear of death, the Sikh takes this route with the life-giving and exhilarating words of the ninth Guru :

Worry only about what is unlikely to happen.

ਚਿੰਤਾ ਤਾਕੀ ਕੀਜੀਐ ਜੋ ਅਨਹੋਨੀ ਹੋਇ ॥

(It is useless to worry about what is inevitable).

He marches forward, ever fresh and progressing without any hitch and hesitation, as the fifth Satguru in *Var Maru* says :

Forward ho ! and turn not to look back.

ਆਗਾਹਾ ਕੂ ਤ੍ਰਾਪਿ ਪਿਛਾ ਫੇਰਿ ਨ ਮੁਹਡੜਾ ॥

With composure, unswervingly, and with confidence, according to the ninth Satguru's guidance :

Frighten no one, nor be afraid of any one.

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥

## PILGRIMAGE

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In almost all religions the custom of pilgrimage is common. Sikhism does not believe in the aims and purposes which some others have attached to it. If a pilgrimage is undertaken for the sake of an outing, to view a new countryside or to visit a place of some historic importance, or to escape from the burning heat of the plains and enjoy the bracing climate of the hills for a few weeks, then it is alright. If it is made in, and to benefit by, a company of persons of knowledge and noble character or if it is undertaken to refresh one's memory of the noble and valorous deeds of heroes connected with the places to be visited, or to help in the management or establishment of a historic place of worship or to make use of the assemblage of the visitors at a place to promote the mission or to put up new ideas, then it is good. Even the Satguru himself visited such places to take advantage of the gatherings there to spread the *Shabd*.

But if it is done with the expectation that by having a dip in water at a particular place, the bad actions done and sins committed will be atoned and one would get a free permit for the future, or if it is done because the Guru's spirit is residing at a particular place and waiting to receive and bless the pilgrim visitor, or if it is undertaken under the impression that a visit to a certain place and a dip in a particular tank (*sarovar*) or river will bring about salvation, then it is totally against the basic principles of Sikhism. Our history tells us that after the sixth Nanak, none of the Gurus ever visited Amritsar which is our most important religious centre. The ninth Guru once did go there but he was not allowed to enter the temple.

If sanctity, as mentioned above, were attached, some one of the later Gurus would certainly have made a visit even of a short duration. There are definite injunctions about it by the Satguru :

I would bathe at sacred places if it could please Him, otherwise, what is the use of bathing.

ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਵਾ ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਾ ਵਿਨੁ ਭਾਣੇ ਕਿ ਨਾਇ ਕਰੀ ॥ (ਜਪੁ)

Pilgrimages, austerities, acts of mercy, charity, and gifts if at all one earns any appreciation for these acts, it is only an insignificant amount.

ਤੀਰਥੁ ਤਪੁ ਦਇਆ ਦਤੁ ਦਾਨੁ ॥

ਜੇ ਕੇ ਪਾਵੈ ਤਿਲ ਕਾ ਮਾਨੁ ॥ (ਜਪੁ)

By hearing the Name, obeying it, and loving it, we wash our sins at the sacred fountain within us.

ਸੁਣਿਆ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭਾਉ ॥

ਅੰਤਰ ਗਤਿ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਮਲਿ ਨਾਉ ॥ (ਜਪੁ)

Why go to bathe at a pilgrim place, for the real pilgrimage is in *Naam*, the understanding of the *Shabd* and the inner wisdom.

ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਵਣ ਜਾਉ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ॥

ਤੀਰਥੁ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਹੈ ॥ (ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮ : ੧ ਛੰਤ)

There is no other pilgrimage place equal to the Guru; because it is the Guru who is the pool of contentment.

ਗੁਰ ਸਮਾਨਿ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਸਰੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਤਾਸੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ (ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਮ : ੧)

Wisdom is the real pilgrim place within us, the true Guru has revealed it.

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਹੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ ਬੁਝਾਇ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮ : ੩)

The mind is soiled, it does not concentrate on One God; the innerself is filled with dirt of duality;

ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਮੈਲਾ ਇਕੁ ਨ ਧਿਆਏ ॥

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਲਾਗੀ ਬਹੁ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਏ ॥

The egocentric repairs to banks of holy bathing places and different countries and gathers more and more dirt of ego.

ਤਟਿ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਦਿਸੰਤਰਿ ਭਵੈ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੀ ਹੋਰੁ

ਵਧੈਰੈ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਲੁ ਲਾਵਣਿਆ ॥ (ਮਾਝ ਮ : ੩)

True Guru is the real pilgrim place; for he dwells on the Lord's Name day and night.

ਤੀਰਥ ਪੂਰਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੋ ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਏ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮ : ੧)

A stone is not purified if bathed at a sacred place, when the mind is soiled with the dirt of ego.

ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਇ ਕਹਾ ਸੁਚਿ ਸੈਲੁ ॥

ਮਨ ਕਉ ਵਿਆਪੈ ਹਉਮੈ ਸੈਲੁ ॥ (ਭੈਰਵ ਮ : ੫)

In fact, it is the mind which is to be controlled, moulded and attuned to the Will of God. The Satguru teaches us that this can be done by dipping the mind in the spiritual nectar of the Satguru's *Sarovar* of *Gurbani* and cleansing it of all prejudices. In *Rag Majh*, the third Satguru says :

The Satguru is the real Pool-Of-Nectar wherein the mind is washed, cleaned of dirt.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰੁ ਸਾਚਾ ਮਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਸੈਲੁ ਚੁਕਾਵਣਿਆ ॥

Without this, the ninth Guru in *Rag Bilaval* says :

If one performs pilgrimages and even keeps fasts, but the mind is not in one's control;

ਤੀਰਥ ਕਰੈ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਫੁਨਿ ਰਾਖੈ ਨਹ ਮਨੁਆ ਬਸਿ ਜਾ ਕੋ ॥

I tell him the truth that his actions are all useless.

ਨਿਹਫਲ ਧਰਮੁ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੁਮ ਮਾਨਹੁਸਾਰੁ ਕਹਤ ਮੈ ਯਾ ਕਉ ॥

The tenth Satguru in the ten *Swayyas* recited when preparing the initiation nectar says :

Men bathe at places of pilgrimage, exercise mercy, control their passions, bestow gifts, exercise abstinence, perform various special ceremonies.

ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਨ ਦਇਆ ਦਮ ਦਾਨ ਸੁ ਸੰਜਮ ਨੇਮ ਅਨੇਕ ਬਿਸੇਖੈ ।

Yet without loving the Supreme Being, even kings are of no account.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਭਜੇ ਬਿਨ ਭੂਪਤਿ ਏਕ ਰਤੀ ਬਿਨ ਏਕ ਨ ਲੇਖੈ ।

Again :

This world is lost, and the next also, for those who go about bathing even in the seven oceans.

ਨ੍ਹਾਤ ਫਿਰਿਓ ਲੀਏ ਸਾਤ ਸਮੁੰਦ੍ਰਨ ਲੋਕ ਗਯੋ ਪਰਲੋਕ ਗਵਾਯੋ ।

Caravans of Sikhs on buses, trucks, tractor-trolleys, cycles, bullock-carts, and on foot going to places of so-called pilgrimages,

and gatherings on *Pooranmasis* (fullmoons), *Amavas* (darknight), *Sankrants* (first of the Bikrami months), *Ashtamis* (eighth of the month), and *Dasmis* (tenth of the month), etc., have become a common sight nowadays. But these are all aping of Hindu ways and rituals. In the Satguru's way, they have no place or value. It has been laid down in our Scripture :

Those who meditate on the Name, their affairs are all taken care of.

ਜਿਨਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਕਾਜ ਸਰੇ ॥

Who repeat the Name of True God Guru, are declared truthful in the Divine Court.

ਹਰਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਆਰਾਧਿਆ ਦਰਗਹ ਸਚਿ ਖਰੇ ॥

All the months, days, and minutes are auspicious and good for him on whom God looketh with favour.

ਮਾਹ ਦਿਵਸ ਮੂਰਤ ਭਲੇ ਜਿਸ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ॥ (ਬਾਰਾ ਮਾਹਾ ਮਾਝ ਮ : ੫)

and then :

Whatever the Perfect Lord does comes about.

ਆਪੇ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

Considerations of lunar or solar days create sense of duality.

ਇਹਿ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ਦੂਜਾ ਦੋਇ ॥

Without the True Guru there is pitch darkness.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਅੰਧੁ ਗੁਬਾਰੁ ॥

Only ignorant fools show any regard for any such particular days and time.

ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਮੁਗਧ ਗਵਾਰ ॥ (ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ : ੩)

## CLOTHES

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About clothes also, Sikhism is not fussy. There are no taboos about our apparel. Sikh history tells us that Guru Nanak Dev, during his long missionary travels, wore different clothes according to the different countries, he visited; the adage being, "while in Rome do as the Romans do." Guru Nanak Dev wore Hindu mendicants robes in such a way that would attract people while visiting Hindu holy places in the east during the gathering at the pilgrimages at those places. When visiting Mecca and the Muslim countries in the west, he put on the dress which the *Hajjis* wear during their pilgrimage. It is worth noting that while going to the north to Kailash and Tibet, he wore skins and furs. The various dresses that the sixth and tenth Gurus put on can be seen even today. Some of them are of the best material then available worn mostly by the highest class of gentry. I was amused to come across a self-appointed preacher who was insistent about the *kachhehra* being of a particular length, of a particular coarse cloth and of a particular cut. Such people only invite ridicule. They who work under such an obsession should see the sixth Satguru's *kachhehra* at Daroli near Moga. It is made of an expensive cloth and has stripes in many pleasing colours.

Some people attach sanctity to nakedness as if disrobing takes one direct to heaven. In India people were accustomed to wearing as little clothes as possible. Perhaps it was due to the hot climate. They used to take one long cloth, one end of which was tied around the loins while the other was thrown over the shoulder. The rest of the body was all bare. We have learnt to wear clothes,

evidently, after the Muslim invasions of India began and the effect of Muslim culture became evident. *Churidar pajama* of straight cut, *salvar* and shirt are adopted from Muslim fashion; while the *churidar pajama* made diagonally from a piece of cloth, was copied and adopted from a French fashion during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign when he employed some French Generals.

There are still some sections, who observe this clothelessness with religious strictness. Amongst the Hindus, there are certain rituals which can only be performed with just one long cloth called *dhoti*. To have a *Ved Path* with proper observations of *maryada* can only be done wearing an unsewn cloth around the body. This precludes a Sikh from doing *Ved Path* like that because a Sikh cannot part with his *kachhehra* (underwear) which has to be sewn all through. Even amongst the Muslims, it appears that when they go for *Hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca, they have to disrobe and put on special *Hajj* apparel of just a sheet of cloth. Amongst the Tibetans also, it is observed that in their original Tibetan dress their right arm is kept naked.

In Sikhism, no such sanctity is attached to any particular dress or clothes, much less to any clothelessness or nudity but unhappily some people have started to take cover under this way of un-covering the body to make an impression upon people and exploit them. If one uncovers his legs, he claims to have become a saint. If the shirt is taken off, he gets promoted to a higher class of saints. May Satguru be thanked that he has enjoined upon the Sikhs not to part with their underwear, *kachhehra*. Otherwise, some of these masqueraders would have taken to nudity as the most effective and fruitful way to impress others, like a class of Hindu mendicants who parade about in total nudity. But the Satguru has very strongly warned against such false and deceitful appearances.



## FOOD

There are no special taboos about our food and drink in Sikhism. The first Satguru says in *Var Asa* :

All foods and drinks are pure, that God has bestowed for sustenance.

ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਹੈ ਦਿਤੇਨੁ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਸੰਬਾਹਿ ॥

The only condition is, as stated in *Sri Rag* by Guru Nanak Dev :

O friend, that food and pleasure are vain,

ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥

which corrupt the mind and pain the body.

ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥

Sikh history tells us that Guru Nanak cooked venison at Kurukshetra. When Pandit Nanu created a row about it, the Satguru explained to him the reality and the hollowness of his false beliefs. This is given elaborately in two *shloks* of *Var Rag Malhar*. A few excerpts from these *shloks* are given below :

Simpletons who do not understand reality, quarrel over the question of flesh, meat;

ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥

Knowing not what is meat and what is vegetable and wherein lie sins.

ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪ ਸਮਾਣੈ ॥

They offer meat of rhinoceros which is cherished by the Gods at their *Yag* ceremonies.

ਗੈਡਾ ਮਾਰਿ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਕੀਏ ਦੇਵਤਿਆਂ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੈ ॥

Those who discard meat and sniff at its smell, swallow

men in the darkness of the night.

ਮਾਸੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਬੈਸਿ ਨਕੁ ਪਕੜਹਿ ਰਾਤੀ ਮਾਣਸ ਖਾਣੇ ॥

According to the *Puranas* and the *Semitic* texts throughout the four ages flesh has been used.

ਮਾਸੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਚਹੁ ਜੁਗਿ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਮਾਣਾ ॥

In *Yag* ceremonies, and wedding festivals, meat has been the cherished dish.

ਜਜਿ ਕਾਜਿ ਵੀਆਹਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੈ ਓਥੈ ਮਾਸੁ ਸਮਾਣਾ ॥

Sikh History tells that from the time of the second Nanak, Guru Angad, meat was served in *langar*. Principal Teja Singh and Dr Ganda Singh in their *History of the Sikhs* have even stated that Sikhs are essentially non-vegetarians. This can be very well-justified because the Sikhs are a militant people. Wielding arms and hunting, as the sixth and the tenth Gurus used to do, cannot fit in with vegetarianism and revulsion from meat. The first shock that the tenth Satguru gave to Madho Das at Nanded who later became Gurbakhsh Singh, became renowned as Banda Singh Bahadur, was to get his goats slaughtered for the consumption of his Sikh forces who were feeling hungry after a long march. Still, in Sikhism, no spiritual value is attached either to eating meat or to give it up. By discarding meat no one can get a visa to heaven, nor will those who eat flesh be doomed.

OFFERING

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Offering, as we have seen, is coming down from the very early and primitive period, when human intelligence was in its nascent stage. It was meant to provide relief to the terror-stricken human mind by an effort to please, appease, and propitiate the offended 'spirits.' It began with simple offering of select eatables and drinks and kept on changing as the human intellect and experience progressed and developed. Offerings, it should be noted, only changed their form, but the idea and basic concept have remained intact and continued to persist even to this day when human intelligence, science, and technology have so much advanced. If some people call it veiled bribery they are not far off the mark. In a way, what else is it ? From mere eatables, the shape of offerings changed to money, coins, grains, sugar, butter and fruits like coconuts, almond, raisins, and so on. Then it took the shape of flowers, garlands, and live animals like goats, sheep, oxen, buffaloes, and in addition to all the aforesaid, it took the shape of even human blood and sacrifice. Quite recently, a case of human sacrifice from Village Nohar in Ganga Nagar, District of Rajasthan, has been reported in the dailies dated 18th of August, 1971. To propitiate Goddess Kali, two innocent children of six and four years were enticed away and done to death. They were reported to be son, Naresh, and daughter, Sunita, of Kanahiya Lal Pariwal, a wholesaler of grain. It is rather significant to note that human sacrifices are generally offered more to goddesses than gods; as if lady gods cherish flesh more than a male god.

In fact, the offerings appear to have changed their forms

and shape according to the conception of the one to be propitiated. In Sikhism too, the system of offering is observed. We generally observe people offering in a congregation of the Sikhs, flowers, money, grain, jaggary, cotton and all sorts of things like that. Sometimes, when there is a rush, people are seen throwing coins from a distance at the place where Guru Granth Sahib is opened, unmindful whether a coin hits the *Granthi* in the eye and they get the "Bull's-eye" or tear off a page of the Holy Book. Sometimes, flower petals wet and dripping are also thrown as offering which soil the cloth covers. The question of what to offer has been very lucidly posed and answered in *Rag Gajri* as follows :

The calf has defiled milk in the teats

ਦੂਧ ਤ ਬਛਰੇ ਥਨਹੁ ਬਿਟਾਰਿਓ ॥

The black-bee has defiled the flower and the fish the water.

ਫੁਲੁ ਭਵਰਿ ਜਲੁ ਮੀਨਿ ਬਿਗਾਰਿਓ ॥੧॥

O mother, what shall I now present as the offering to my Lord.

ਮਾਈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਹਾ ਲੈ ਚਰਾਵਉ ॥

For, I cannot find a lovely flower that is not defiled.

ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਫੁਲੁ ਅਨੁਪੁ ਨ ਪਾਵਉ ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

The Chandan tree is girdled by snakes;

ਮੈਲਾਗਰ ਬੇਰੇ ਹੈ ਭੁਇਅੰਗਾ ॥

Nectar and poison abide in one and the same place.

ਬਿਖੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਬਸਹਿ ਇਕ ਸੰਗਾ ॥

Then with incense, lighted lamps, eatables and fragrant flowers,

ਗੂਪ ਦੀਪ ਨਈਬੇਦਹਿ ਬਾਸਾ ॥

How is Thy servant to worship Thee ?

ਕੈਸੇ ਪੂਜ ਕਰਹਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਦਾਸਾ ॥

Then the answer is provided :

I would dedicate and make an offering of my body and mind,

ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਅਰਪਉ ਪੂਜ ਚਰਾਵਉ ॥

And thus, by the grace of the Guru attain the immaculate God.

ਗੁਰਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਪਾਵਉ ॥

I have no other way to offer and worship Thee.

ਪੂਜਾ ਅਰਚਾ ਆਹਿ ਨ ਤੋਰੀ ॥

Says Ravidas, I do not know what will be my fate.

ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਕਵਨ ਗਤਿ ਮੇਰੀ ॥

The shape of offering had of necessity to change according to the Sikh concept of a Formless, Unborn, God and Guru. In *Rag Ramkali, Anand*, the third Satguru says :

By offering body, mind, wealth and everything to the Guru and by carrying out His instructions one gets salvaged.

ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਉਪਿ ਗੁਰ ਕਉ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਾਈ ॥

When a Sikh pays obeisance to the *Ishat* Guru, he first gets into the "Knight's Pose", what is called *Bir-Assan*. Then he bows his head and touches the ground. This is done not only in repentance or to seek indulgence but is meant primarily to offer the head to the Guru. Head includes all the intellect, argument, reasoning and thinking powers. One gets into *Bir-Assan* by grounding the right knee unto the floor and keeping the left one pointing upward. A Sikh when initiated gets practical training and full rehearsal of getting into this pose (ਬੀਰ ਆਸਨ).

## LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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One sometimes wonders and admires the way Guru Nanak Dev disseminated knowledge and spread the message, the teachings, he brought from the Supreme Master, while travelling almost throughout the civilised world in the beginning of the sixteenth century. He travelled from China to the Mediterranean, and from central Asia to Ceylon and Malaya. He had no interpreter with him during these travels to convey the message. No Prophet or *Avtar* is known to have travelled so far and wide. It could only have been a divine spark in him that guided him to convey the message he carried to all these different peoples, to different countries, and nations.

In the *bani*, he recorded, we find that the Satguru repudiated any claim of sanctity of any particular language as Sanskrit has for the Hindus, and Arabic for the Muslims. He used the language of the masses, making free and generous use of Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Hindi, and Punjabi, and appealed direct to the heart and intellect in simple words and phrases. Thus bypassing any intermediary priest class, he saved the common people from exploitation and subjugation by the priesthood, both Hindu and Muslim, and created a contact direct with the masses.

The Sikh approach being through intellect, argument, and knowledge, literacy was an essential first step on this "Way to Anandpur." Without this, one has to subordinate his self to another for understanding the right interpretation of the *Shabd*. Thus, the danger of creating a sort of priest class becomes imminent. We find that the teaching and propagation of Punjabi in Gurmukhi script

was started on a regular and organised basis, from as early a time as that of the second Nanak, Guru Angad. During the third Satguru's time, the learning of Punjabi had vastly spread amongst the Sikhs. The *Gurbani* was first written down on paper during his time. Finally, the fifth Satguru compiled and completed the Holy Granth. The contribution of the tenth Satguru is as significant as that of his predecessors in this respect. He had as many as fifty-two poets under his patronage and in his service at Paonta and Anandpur. Some of these men of letters, he deputed to go to Banars and other centres of learning to acquire all kinds of knowledge and master the *Shastras* and Scriptures of other religions and schools of thought. He then got all the *Shastras*, classics and old mythological books translated from Sanskrit and other obsolete languages into the everyday language and made them available to the masses. It is regrettable that this cartloads of literature was mostly lost during the evacuation of Anandpur when crossing the flooded Sarsa. Only some was left, a portion of which was collected along with some other portions and copies here and there with the Sikhs, by Bhai Mani Singh, and incorporated later on in a volume called *Dasam Granth*. Eventually, the tenth Satguru was able to announce in 1690 that no one had remained unlettered and illiterate amongst the Sikhs. Every Sikh, young and old, had become literate. This claim was upheld when in 1699, the Satguru administered *amrit* and created the order of the Khalsa. There were no prayer books then as there were no printing presses. There was no volume even of Guru Granth Sahib then in the Satguru's court or anywhere except the one original volume with the Sodhis at Kartarpur. But all the Sikhs, who were at that time initiated, remembered by heart at least the five *banis* that are daily recited, as is evident from the fact that they formed further units of *Panj Pyaras* and continued to administer *amrit*. The Sikhs initiated on that occasion are estimated to be between 70,000 and 80,000.

## CAUSES OF INDIAN DEGRADATION

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Guru Nanak Dev before launching 'Operation Salvage' and starting his mission of uplift and enlightenment, first thought over, observed, studied and gauged the causes which had led to India's downfall and degradation. This took him the early years of his life till he was almost 37 years of age. The assessment he made can be briefly summarised as follows.

During the Ramayan and Mahabharat periods, people were in high spirits and in trends of glory, ever ready, welcoming opportunities to face and overcome conflicts with clean hands, courage, and bravery. To quote an instance from the Ramayan, when Hanuman met Sita in Ravan's captivity, he offered to take her away, but she refused the offer saying it was not right to escape stealthily like that let Ram come, fight out, and take her back. We have an example in the Mahabharat also that Draupadi, after her humiliation in the Royal Court, refused to do up her hair until she had washed them with the blood of Dushasan. But this spirit and mentality changed, when after the battle of Kalinga, Ashoka embraced Buddhism and abjured the 'Sword'. For Ashoka personally, it may have been a great day. Some people even glorify it as the day of realisation and transformation. In fact, it turned out to be the beginning of the downfall of Hindu supremacy in India. Ashoka's embracing of Buddhism may well have been a noble personal achievement, but politically, renunciation of Sword undid the glories of India that were. Renunciation and self-defence or governance do not go together. They are opposed to each other. Since this abjuration of the sword by Ashoka and emergence of the



cult of renunciation and non-violence, these brave and manly qualities and high spirits began to disappear in India.

Another factor which contributed to the downfall was affluence, love of riches and worship of *maya*, *Lakshmi*. The alluvial and fertile soil of the Indo-Gangetic plains and the other rich productive lands of the country provided the Indians plenty with comparatively little effort. This made them easy-going and calculative. Goethe also had once said that everything in the world may be endured except continual prosperity. Weather was another cause which made Indians further indolent.

There was yet another factor which weighed heavily. This was individualism amongst the Hindus. Their worship and everyday life is all individualistic. That is why their religion and interests are strictly personal and revolve only around self-loyalty and has, therefore, remained confined to family or caste or have been at the most, tribal or regional. There being no opportunity for community assemblage, there was little neighbourly love or sympathy. It is a hard fact of history that there has never been what may be called an Indian nation or any such idea, much less any feeling or sentiment, of what is called nationalism. The presentday India was the formulation brought about for the convenience of British administration.

The division of Hindu society into four watertight and insulated compartments by the principle of Varanashram was another important factor to keep people always in mutually strained and bitter relations. This bitterness has resulted in inhuman treatment meted out to the *Harijans*, the lower castes, by those who belonged to higher castes by just a fluke of birth. This continues even today as is evident from a news item in the daily *Tribune* of Chandigarh dated 6th September, 1971, flashed from Madras dated 5th September :

"A new road for the exclusive use of *Harijans* has been laid out in Sevalapuri Village of Ginjee Taluk in South Arcot District.

"Mr. Elayaperumal, former Chairman of the Backward Classes Commission, told PTI that the new road had been constructed since some sections of the caste Hindus had been

objecting to *Harijans* using a stretch of two and half furlongs in the village.

“Of late the *Harijans* started asserting their right but caste Hindus brought pressure on the authorities to open a new road parallel to the existing one for *Harijans*.”

On the top of all these factors was the fact that the people had become cut off from the Source of Life and the Omnipotent. This had been usurped and monopolized by the priest class. The lower castes were not even allowed to read the *Vedas*, the Scriptures, so much so that they had been denied the right of even hearing the Scriptures. This commercialization of spirituality and religion had made the masses anchorless and without any haven. Thus being adrift, they had lost faith in the All-Powerful Being and had also lost confidence in themselves. Generation of this oppression, depression and subjection had come to stay. The Hindus had developed the mentality and an approach which always tried to avoid conflict by even surrender, prostration, submission, and appeasement or compromise. They could only harass and become aggressive towards those who happened to be weaker, but quailed and quivered when confronted by those who were stronger.

This mentality, therefore, resulted in opening the floodgates to foreign invaders to whom the whole country was offered as if on a platter for plunder, massacre, and taking away wealth and driving away men and women as slaves. And it remained a one-way traffic. India was always attacked and plundered, as it lay helplessly prostrate before any one who liked to invade it.

Great Shankracharya had also once noticed this depraved degradation brought about in the country by this mentality of self-humiliation and avoidance of conflict. From south to north and east to west, he untiringly worked to reawaken the people back to manliness. As a consequence of his laudable efforts the pre-Buddhist Brahminism was revived and self-humiliating non-violent Buddhism kicked out of the country lock, stock, and barrel. But the virus had gone so deep into the minds and brains of the people that one human span of life was not long enough to complete the task. Although Buddhism was banished, it left behind its mark

and effect on the thinking and living of the people. In one form or the other they still continue and persist. Jainism, a sister school of thought of Buddhism, managed to escape the onslaught of the great Shankracharya and stayed on in the country. And so the mentality lurked and revived, though sometimes it changed form.

History tells us that India had never had the capacity or capability to make an attack across its borders, though we try to cover this weakness and imbecility and deceive and please ourselves by calling it our greatness and peace-loving tendency. The first attack across the Indus from the Indian side, was made by the Khalsa Army during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's suzerainty over the Punjab.

Consequently, we see the Indian borders shrinking from the Hindukush to the Beas and Hussainiwala on the Sutlej, and from Duzdab-Zahidan at the Iranian border to Rajasthan in the west, and from Burma to almost the walls of Calcutta in the east. In the north too Gilgit and half of Ladakh and Kashmir had been eroded away.

We have to hang our heads low when we read in our history that to avoid conflict some Hindu rulers offered their daughters to the Delhi sovereigns to please and appease them, and Hindu men of influence and vested interests joined hands with the tyrant persecutors of their own people.

The recent division of the country and creation of Pakistan are evidence that this mentality and outlook still persist. Most of our present-day policies also are worked out under this very obsession.

### *Results and Achievements of the Satguru's Movement*

The Satguru undertook to remove all these weaknesses and causes that had caused the people to fall so low. The movement which the Satguru started to achieve these ends took 200 years of consistent and strenuous effort, in which many hardships had to be borne and sacrifices offered. It took the Satguru four generations to change the mind-set of the people. It will be interesting to mention some of the principal steps taken, and results and achievements obtained.

The first essential thing the Satguru aimed at and brought about was to provide the anchor to stabilise and fortify the trembling mind. This was done by reviving and re-energizing the connecting link between the masses and the Master. With faith and confidence in the Supreme, Fearless Being, he said, the mind could become stable, fearless and self-confident. The Satguru laid down :

Do not terrorize any one, nor submit to domineering by anybody.

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ, ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥ (ਸਲੋਕ ਮ : ੯)

He brought home to the forlorn human mind that the Omnipotent Guru, along with all his strength, forces and power was always (ਅੰਗ ਸੰਗ) present with them as the guiding force and protecting deity. This created a sense of self-help, self-confidence, self-protection, daring bravery and invincibility and made his disciple equal to a *lakh* and a quarter. This changed the life, the outlook and the spirit altogether.

The Satguru's great achievement lay in transforming human beings into gods; turning pay-load donkeys, serfs, and slaves into *Sardars* and valiant knights; turning sparrows and cows that were there to be killed and milked, into hawks and lions and turning the low castes, oppressed, depressed, and exploited by the high castes, into indomitable and formidable fighters before whom *Rajas* and *Nawabs* quivered and trembled.

Another achievement of the Guru was to free us from rituals and superstitions and bondage of gods and goddesses, and *avtars* who take birth and die, and emancipate us from the fear of the priests, the fear of the high classes, the fear of the state, and the fear of the ruler. This was done by putting us straight and into direct contact with the Fearless Creator. He said :

With the Fearless One dwelling within thee;  
where do you get the fear from ?

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਸੰਗਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੈ ਬਸਤੇ, ਇਹੁ ਡਰਨੁ ਕਹਾ ਤੇ ਆਇਆ ॥ (ਗਉੜੀ ਮ: ੫)

The Satguru's way of life being of intellectual understanding of the *Shabd* and its interpretation in actual life, the mind was to be controlled, trained, and moulded to become attuned to the Divine Will. No monopoly in this respect was claimed. Everyone was

welcome to adopt this way and reach the goal. This created hopefulness, optimism and high spirits (ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ).

The Satguru liberated us from the deadly tentacles of the Hindu priest class. This grip was so strong that the fingerprints of the deadly hands are still visible. It was also an achievement that for the first time the picture of India as an integrated whole was projected by the Satguru in 1699 at Anandpur.

In 1703, the tenth Guru laid the first brick of what is nowadays called the Red Cross, when his Sikhs led by Bhai Kanhaya attended to the wounded in battles irrespective of whether they were friends or foes. The Satguru's arrows were tipped with gold so that the survivor could be attended to or the dependents helped.

When he escaped from Chamkaur, the Satguru set a personal example for us never to give up hope and endeavour and have unflinching faith and devotion to the Master and confidence in the justness of the cause. We see that from a worldly point of view, he had lost his four sons, mother, father, and everything at Anandpur. He even had no followers with him when he actually left Chamkaur. Yet, it is awe-inspiring to note with what rapidity he recouped and reorganised and gathered around him again a formidable force of selfless God-conscious men, and in what victorious strains he wrote his epistle of victory — *Zafarnama*, to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, and how the spiritual reawakening and regeneration of "man" and resurrection of human values and restoration of consciousness of the self, and mental, moral and social, uplift was brought to perfection. The result will be worth illustrating by the following anecdote of Sikh history which is full of such events.

In December 1715, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, (Banda Singh Bahadur), was arrested by the Mughal Forces after the siege of Gurdas Nangal and taken to Delhi along with 740 Sikhs. They were executed in the beginning of March, 1716, in batches of one hundred a day. It is noteworthy that not a single one of them, and there were even some teenagers amongst them, abjured his faith or faltered.

## HINDUS, MOHAMMEDANS VIS-A-VIS SIKHS

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Sikhs have generally been working under the Hindu spell that they were created only to defend the Hindu Dharam and Hindu Nation. This purpose having been fulfilled, a section of the Hindus who have never tolerated the independent existence of the Sikhs, have begun to suggest that the Sikhs should better merge now into the Hindu fold. This spell had even created a common aversion amongst the Sikhs towards the Muslims as a whole. It will be worthwhile, therefore, to look into the facts and reality of their mutual relations.

Sikhism, the Satguru's way of life, was founded by Guru Nanak. We have seen that when Guru Nanak started this movement in India, the Aryan and Semitic thoughts and cultures were in conflict. Sometimes it took shape of bloody happenings and aggression and tyranny on the physically and politically weak which were the Hindu Aryans. Guru Nanak struck the middle way. It steered clear of both, though it passed through the middle. It was an independent approach. This is vividly and definitely made clear by the tenth Satguru in his significant *Swayya* that we recite every evening :

Since I have embraced Thy Feet, I have brought no one under my eye :

ਪਾਇ ਗਏ ਜਬ ਤੇ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਤਬ ਤੇ ਕੋਊ ਆਖ ਤਰੇ ਨਹੀ ਆਨਯੋ ।

Ram and Rahim, the *Purans* and the *Quran* express various opinions, but I believe in none of them.

ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਅਨੇਕ ਕਹੈ ਮਤ ਏਕ ਨ ਮਾਨਯੋ ।

The *Smritis*, the *Shastras*, and the *Vedas* all expound so

many different doctrines, but I accept none of them.

ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਬੇਦ ਸਭੈ ਬਹੁ ਭੇਦ ਕਹੈ ਹਮ ਏਕ ਨ ਜਾਨਯੋ ।

O Holy God, by Thy favour, it is not I who have been speaking, all that has been said, hath been said by Thee.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਿਪਾਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕਰਿ ਮੈ ਨ ਕਹਯੋ ਸਭ ਤੋਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ ।

But it was not meant to come in conflict with the already warring elements or to elbow out anyone of them. Instead the Satguru wanted to bring the two systems, at loggerheads with each other, together in amity. That is why Sikhism is also called the third way of life (ਤੀਸਰਾ ਪੰਥ) and independent way (ਨਿਰਮਲ ਪੰਥ). The Satguru has brought together both Hindu and Mohammedan men-of-God, who believed compassion to be the fountain-head of religion and spiritual purification and clean action as the ultimate aim. The presence of the *bani* in the Holy Granth of such different sages, Muslims, Vaishnavs, high castes and untouchables together, and the respectful status equal to that of the Guru thus granted to them, is the living evidence of it. When a Sikh pays his obeisance to the Holy Granth, he bows and offers his head to all of them. In Sikhism, certain philosophical interpretations are common with Hindu thought, like life after death, while such concepts as the Oneness of God and congregational worship have much in common with Islam. In some ways, it can be said that Sikhism is nearer to Islam than to Hinduism. Sikhism, in fact, is a bulwark against ritualism, formalism and hollow philosophies whether in Hinduism or in Islam. It advocates and preaches the revival of unflinching and devoted faith and confidence in the Ultimate Reality, the truth; and interpreting this faith and belief in actual life.

It is a basic principle of Sikhism not to bend before brute force, aggression, or tyranny. This has to be opposed tooth and nail even with our lives, first by non-violent and peaceful struggle and even by offering our life. This example was set by the fifth Satguru. If this did not succeed, the struggle was not to be given up in frustration or abject surrender. It becomes incumbent, then, for a Sikh to wield the sword as the sixth Satguru did. It was a mere chance that the rulers, at that time, were Mohammedans and were bigoted, tyrants and aggressors. They had, therefore, to be

opposed. While the Hindus were weak, imbecile, oppressed and unable to defend themselves. Naturally they came closer to the Sikhs who became their saviours. But it is important to keep in mind that Sikhism and Sikhs were not opposed to Islam or the Mohammedans as such. Now it will be proper to have a look at the relations between the Sikhs and either of the two.

Hindus being the victims of the Mohammedan rulers' bigoted fanaticism and tyranny, came closer to the Sikhs to seek protection. Naturally, therefore, most of the conversions to Sikhism happened to be from amongst the Hindus. But conversions from Mohammedans also continued. There is no denying the fact that Guru Nanak Dev and his three successors came from Hindu stock. But after the fourth Satguru, the Guruship remained confined to the Sikhs (ਘਰ ਦੀ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਰਹੀ).

History tells us that the first who discerned the Divine Light in Guru Nanak was the Mohammedan Chief, Rai Bular, of Talwandi Rai Bhoi Ki, and Satguru's first disciple and companion was Bhai Mardana, a minstrel, who played on the *rabab* and remained in Satguru's attendance till his end. His last rites were performed by the Satguru himself. Bhai Mardana and his successors, Satta and Balwand, had the honour of getting their compositions, included in the Holy Granth. Then we find the third Guru establishing twenty-two *Manjis*, that is centres of Sikh Mission. One well-known centre was under a Mohammedan called Allahyaar in the area now called Kapurthala.

Emperor Akbar got so enamoured of the efforts and policy of the Guru Darbar in bringing about unity and integration among the different communities at loggerheads with each other, that he came all the way to Goindwal to have an audience with the third Nanak and study the Sikh way, which he later adopted at the Imperial Court.

The present site of Amritsar was obtained from Emperor Akbar in 1577 by the fourth Guru by paying 700 Akbari rupees to the residents of Tung who were the owners of the land.

By the time of the fifth Guru, Mohammedans, especially Sufis, came very close to the Sikhs. So much so, when the



foundation stone of the Golden Temple at Amritsar was to be laid, the fifth Guru called Hazrat Mian Mir from Lahore to do it.

The sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind, began to collect volunteers for his forces to protect and safeguard their worldly and religious interests. In these volunteers, there were several Mohammedans too. It will be worth noting that while building the town of Kiratpur in the hilly Sutlej Valley, the Satguru erected, besides gurdwaras, temples as well as mosques, at his own expense. At Sri Hargobindpur also he built a mosque at his own expense for the use of his Mohammedan troops.

Prince Dara Shikoh, like many other Sufis, was an admirer of the Satguru and close to the Sikhs. When pursued by the army of Aurangzeb, Prince Dara Shikoh asked for the Guru's help which was extended by Guru Har Rai by sending out his force to guard the passage of the Beas till the Prince was able to cross and escape.

When the birth of Guru Gobind Singh took place at Patna, Bhikhan Shah, a Mohammedan Pir, sitting at Ghuram in the district of Karnal, now in district Patiala, bowed to the East, when he read his *Namaz of Thayjud*. His followers were surprised and asked the reason for it, because Muslims bow towards Mecca in the West. Bhikhan Shah replied that the Divine Light had flashed in that direction, and he marched off to Patna to see the Guru. In the battle of Bhangani near Paonta, Syed Budhu Shah along with his four sons and 700 disciples joined the forces of the Guru against the Hill Rajas who were defeated and routed at the end of February, 1686. Budhu Shah lost his four sons and several of his followers in the battle. We all know of Ghani Khan and Nabhi Khan, the two Pathan brothers of Machhiwara who risked their own lives, staked everything, and took the Guru on a palanquin on their shoulders and with timely assistance of Qazi Pir Mohammed got the Satguru through the enemy lines to safety after the escape from Chamkaur, while the Hindu and Mughal Imperial Forces were in hot pursuit. It was the Muslim Nawab of Malerkotla, who had the courage and daring to protest when the two younger sons of the tenth Guru, innocent children of seven and nine years, were cruelly tortured and put to death by Wazir Khan at Sirhind. We find that this

devotion and love of the house of Malerkotla towards the Guru and the Sikhs continues to this day. On the ninth of March, 1969, the Nawab got an *Akhand Path* of Guru Granth Sahib performed in his Darbar Hall at Malerkotla. At the place of the throne of the Nawab Ruler, the Holy Granth was opened. Personally, orthodox Muslims themselves, His Highness the Nawab and the Begam Sahiba stood in attendance with *chauwar* in their hands. I had the pleasure and privilege to be personally present at the occasion. Recently, the Nawab was returned to the Punjab Legislative Assembly on an Akali Ticket. His close relative leading a *jatha* on September 15, 1971, comprising of Sikhs as well as Mohammedans to Delhi for liberation of the gurdwaras in the capital, surpasses everything.

The Sikh conception of God resembles more the monotheistic God of the Muslims than any of the gods connected with the polytheistic view of the Hindus. In other ways too like castelessness, congregational worship, community dining, joint action, and positive activities in living, the Satguru's way of life is nearer to Islam than to individualistic, introvert, self-centred Hinduism.

This nearness is confirmed in the words of the tenth Master in *Zafarnama* when he wrote to Aurangzeb that he had to battle the mischievous hill people as they were idol-worshippers and he was an idol-breaker.

It is not correct to say that the Sikh conflict was with the Muslims as a whole at any time. If it were so, Muslims of note like Syed Budhu Shah, Syed Begh, and Maimu Khan would not have fought on the side of the Sikhs against the Mughal Forces. They did so because they appreciated the rightful stand of the Satguru and the cause his Sikhs were fighting for. If it were so, Mata Sundri would not have established her residence at Delhi itself after the evacuation of Anandpur and the barbarous treatment meted out to her family and innocent children, and she could not have issued her writs to the *Panth* from under the nose of the Emperor after Guru Gobind Singh's death. Two orchards and a village presented to the child Gobind Rai by Nawabs Rahim Bakhsh and Karim Bakhsh are to this day with the Patna Sahib Takht. 5,000 acres of

land belonging to the Nanak Matta Gurdwara in U.P. was an offering from a Muslim Begum. Sometimes I begin to feel, when studying without prejudice, the *Zafarnama*, the letter of victory written by the tenth Guru to Emperor Aurangzeb, that there was no bitterness at all or any enmity between them. The way the Satguru puts up his case, reprimands the Emperor for having lost his sense of duty and his failure to administer justice evenly to people who were put under his charge by the Almighty God and reminds him of the day of reckoning, and describes to him the atrocities and tyrannies that his men perpetrated on innocent citizens of the land, all these are certainly not the normal way to address an enemy. This letter was written after the escape from Chamkaur and the deaths of the Satguru's four sons and mother. As a result of this epistle, a meeting between the Emperor and the Satguru was being negotiated when the Emperor expired. After the death of Aurangzeb, we find Guru Gobind Singh taking part in the war of succession and helping win the throne for the right claimant, Bahadur Shah. No enemy would do that.

Similarly, the Sikhs have had very close connections and relations with the Hindus. The first four Gurus having come from Hindu families. The circle of relatives, friends and associates, naturally expanded more with them than with Muslims. Most of the ceremonies and rites performed by the Sikhs are very near to those of the Hindus. Our habits, customs and most of the ways of living are similar to that of the Hindus, though some of our important principles, tenets, and outlook are nearer to Muslims than to Hindus. If the Sikhs came into conflict with the Mughal rulers, it was for the sake of and to protect the Hindus. In fact, the Sikhs have fought the battles of the Hindus. Naturally, therefore, the enrolment of volunteers and conversions to Sikhism came mostly from the Hindu fold. When the Sikhs were fighting, their battles against tyranny, as a natural consequence, the Hindus looked after the Sikh families in the villages. It may be mentioned that it was under these circumstances, when the Sikh womenfolk and youngsters came under the Hindu influence that Sikhism began to be corrupted by Hindu ideas. The martyrdom of the ninth Guru, as we have seen,

was due to the word he had given to the Brahmins from Kashmir that their *Dharam* would be protected and the Mughal tyranny extirpated. In reality it was a sacrifice for freedom of everybody's faith.

It is surprising to see that in spite of all this suffering, sacrifices, martyrdoms offered by innumerable Sikhs for them, there has always been an important section among the Hindus that has invariably opposed the interests and the very existence of the Sikhs. They call us as one of them, but in doing so in reality they mean the denial of any separate Sikh identity. At one time, it was Chandu who became instrumental in torturing the fifth Guru to death, at another it was Sucha Nand, who prompted Wazir Khan to execute the young innocent sons of Guru Gobind Singh at Sirhind. When the son and successor of Guru Teg Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh, was preparing to preserve the link and fulfil the promise that his father had given to the distressed and helpless Hindus, it were the Hindu Hill Rajas who began to harass and attack him. The first battle, therefore, the Guru had to fight at Bhangani, was forced upon him by these Hindu Chieftains. When convincingly routed, these Hindu Rajas approached the Mughal Emperor at Delhi and brought the Imperial Forces to help them against the Guru. Then we have the ignominious Lakhpat Rai who personally commanded the Lahore Forces during the first holocaust at Kahnuwan. It was he who got a general proclamation issued for the extirpation of Sikhs and began to implement it from 10th March, 1746.

This mentality of some of the Hindus has persisted even into our own times. It should suffice to cite just one instance here about it, and that too of no smaller person than Mr Gandhi himself.

In the mid-thirties of this century, alarmed by the spate of conversions of the untouchables to Islam and Christianity, the great Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Dr Ambedkar realised that the salvation of the depressed scheduled castes from the unjust oppression and cruel tyranny at the hands of the so-called higher castes since times immemorial could only be in their wholesale conversion to Sikhism. In their wisdom and farsight, they drew up a scheme and agreed to a pact and started to implement it. Dr

Ambedkar paid visits to Amritsar and left some of his fellow workers there to study and understand Sikhism and its institutions. The Khalsa College at Bombay is one of the outcomes of this. But to the misfortune of all concerned, this scheme was confided to Mahatma Gandhi on a strict and definite understanding not to let it out till the proper time. But unless the Mahatma was swept by rank communalism and prejudice against the Sikhs, why should he have thrown the confidence reposed in him to the winds and without any qualms of conscience committed a breach of faith by a premature condemnation of the scheme, saying "It would be far better that the crores of untouchables of India got converted to Islam than they become Sikhs." Eventually, at his threat to fast unto death the whole effort flopped. Friends who negotiated with Dr Ambedkar and once met him even at Janjira — a small island near Bombay in May, 1937, will bear me out. They included Sardar Narain Singh, then Manager of Nanakana Sahib, Principal Kashmira Singh, Master Sujan Singh, Bawa Harkishan Singh Principal, Sardar Ishar Singh Majhail, Sardar Teja Singh Akarpuri and Sardar Gurdit Singh Sethi, then President Singh Sabha, Bombay, who are still present in this world.

There is another more recent instance also, which I presume most of us clearly remember. In 1929, Sikhs were given a solemn assurance by Hindu Congress leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, and also assured by a formal resolution of the All India National Congress at Lahore, that no Constitution of free India shall be framed by the majority community unless it was acceptable to the Sikhs. Until August, 1947, this was repeatedly re-iterated. But when later on after independence, Jawahar Lal Nehru was reminded of it, he blandly told the Sikhs that circumstances had now changed, as if pledges are given to be eaten away when convenient. Not only that, we all know that a circular was issued in the Punjab soon after the partition of the country that an eye be kept on the Sikhs. They have since been practically looked upon as if they were aliens.

The same mentality worked when the present Punjab state was presented to us — a torso of a state (*Suba*) without head,

arms, or legs.

There are friends and foes among both Hindus and Muslims but sometimes only one side of the picture is projected and that too after having been partially drawn and prejudicially coloured. These facts, some pleasant and some may be unpleasant, are mentioned only to show in what awkward and difficult situations the Satguru's mission is taken forward. Where there is frontal confrontation, as was the case during the conflict with the Mughal Forces and the Pathan and Durrani invaders, the matter is straight and simple. The steel clanked and blood flowed.

Strong sinews and tough muscles with a courageous heart, perserverance and faith, along with fighting tact and will to sacrifice, ultimately count. But when the attack is cloaked, surreptitious, camouflaged, and from within, a stab in the back, a hit below the belt, sugar-coated poison administered within our hearths and homes, the matter becomes serious and dangerous, and conflict complicated and difficult. You have to guard and protect every nook and cranny. This is what the Sikhs have to face today when the country has attained independence.

Unfortunately, Sikh history has not been written without an ulterior and alien edge on it. Some attempts of late have been made by some men of letters to probe and dig deep into facts and to narrate the happenings without any bias and project a true and factual picture. But writing or rewriting history is a colossal job. It should be tackled effectively on a collective level only rather than individually. It will be an important achievement when this task is fulfilled, because the teachings of the Satguru can best be understood from the anecdotes of history wherein those teachings stand implemented and explained in actual life.

## UNITY, INTOLERANCE AND CULTURE

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### *The Need*

No national integration can be brought about nor independence or sovereignty can be preserved without unity. For any progress, any development, any advancement and uplift, unity is of utmost importance. No organisation, political, social, or economic can function successfully without unity and disciplined teamwork. No industrial expansion, economic development or green or white revolution can be brought about or standard of living raised without peace and stability which depend on unity in the country. Above all, unity is essential for peace, prosperity, protection, and defence of the fatherland. It is necessary also for the happiness and well-being of the citizens. Even in playfield and in sports, it is team-spirit and unity which lead to laurels. For strengthening of independence, keeping the nation's head high and brightening its honour, unity is indispensable. Sanctity of national traditions and way of life can only be upheld by unity. To meet foreign high-handedness and aggression, it is unity in the country which is important. Even in spiritual considerations, unity of God-head is the ideal and the ultimate Truth. This holds good equally in national matters as well as in family and personal affairs.

### *Consequences*

Lack of unity creates mutual distrust, mutual suspicion, bickering and bad blood. It can also lead to mutual confrontations

and bloody internecine conflicts. Ultimately, it can end in disintegration of the nation and Balkanisation of the country and in slavery and serfdom of its people.

Induction of a person of evil spirit in a well-knit happy family works like a drop of sour curd in milk, if there is no unity.

It was disunity at home which caused banishment of Shri Ram Chander and it was disunity again that brought about Ravan's fall and conquest of Lanka. In Ayodhya, the insistence of Ram's stepmother, Kekai resulted in his banishment for fourteen years while in Lanka, Ravan was vanquished because his brother, Vabhishan, turned a traitor.

India remained slave for almost a thousand years because of lack of unity. If one chieftain was subdued by a foreigner, the other celebrated his defeat, not knowing that his turn would follow soon.

India, of course, had never been a united country or a nation as such, until the British bound it together. But whatever territories in Northern India happened to be consolidated together during the reign of Ashoka began to disintegrate after his death, until the whole region was divided into small principalities and tribal chieftainships. This disunity offered the country on a platter to any foreign adventurer who took it into his head to invade and plunder Bharat.

The success of Mohammedan invasions of India and occupation of the country was mainly due to dissensions and disunity. And so was the British infiltration and overlordship of the country facilitated and made easy by native disunity. It was disunity based on traitorship in the Court of Lahore which so speedily extinguished the ruling line of Ranjit Singh.

With scores of lives lost and sacrifices offered, with thousands and thousands who courted arrest and with all the hardships suffered, if after getting even a mini-Punjab-Suba, Sikh legislators cannot get together and form a government of their own, it is because of lamentable lack of unity among the Sikhs.

### *Causes*

Causes that generate disunity and cause lack of unity and



disharmony are many and diverse. Complacency, individualism, self-centred mentality, frustration, profundity, ego, inferiority and superiority complexes, selfishness, and greed contribute to lack of unity.

With all our provincialism, regionalism, parochialism, lingualism, and growing allegiance and loyalty to outsiders, and acceptance without reasoning and proper examination of foreign thought, and the cult of the gun and dagger, we are, no doubt, heading towards disunity and, if it is not bravely faced and honestly checked, no wonder it may lead to dismemberment of the country and untold suffering of the people.

Communal bigotry and religious frenzy result in serious and bloody disunity. Ego, of any kind, is bad enough. But religious ego is the worst and most dangerous. It not only causes disunity but perpetration of brutal and inhuman atrocities on the members of the other faith, while the perpetrator is at perfect ease and equanimity of mind and carries a satisfied conscience as if a free visa to heaven is obtained. The heart-rending sufferings of the Blacks in America and still greater of the Sikhs in India are quite recent examples of this religious ego.

Favouritism, nepotism, jobbery, preferential treatment to one and denial of justice to another, discrimination, unfair treatment and injustice, cause heartburning, repugnance, and resilience, and if persisted in, lead to resistance resulting in badblood and disunity.

Policy of divide and rule pays dividends to those who rule, but it results in bloody conflagrations and enmities amongst the people and "post-mortem" dismemberment of the country. It is obviously meant to create dissensions, set one group of people against the other, and definitely to create disunity and break up of the country. We have witnessed the British rulers of India making use of this policy so successfully and effectively. We have also seen how it began on a firm footing with separate electorates, pampering of one section and putting down the other, and how finally it culminated in the division of the country and resulted in bloodshed, loot, arson, rape, annihilation, and genocide. They were foreign rulers. But our own national rulers who happen to be in

power at the moment, make use, unfortunately, of the same policy, unmindful evidently of its terrible and suicidal consequences.

When a minority, whether religious, social, or political, is dissatisfied, disgruntled, improperly and unjustly treated as unequal and second-class citizens, and feels insecure, oppressed, and pressurized, it becomes a potential danger to unity. It is always for the majority community to be not only just but magnanimous and to extend love and understanding to keep the minorities satisfied and content. In a democratic set up if the majority community becomes intolerant and bigoted, it can wreak havoc and create hell for the people.

### *Solution*

Every country, at one time or another, had to face and solve the problem of a minority in some form or the other to maintain unity. The solution differed according to circumstances and conditions that prevailed, the period of civilization and the stage of its development.

Primitive tribes brought about unity by crude methods of fighting. They warred until one was annihilated or absorbed. Annihilation meant genocide. The vanquished males were killed and their womenfolk taken as prizes of war and absorbed by the conquerors among themselves. Philip of Macedon took a barbarian princess as his wife who mothered Alexander the Great. When Alexander conquered Persia, he took the Persian Princess Roxanne as his wife. A good many of his officers also married Persian women. In India too the Macedonian General Sleukos, who was deputed to govern the Punjab by Alexander, married the daughter of Chandergupt Maurya, the strongest ruler of the time in Northern India.

Later on in the 16th and 17th centuries also peace and harmony were sought through such marriages when the Rajput Princes of Rajputana offered their girls to the Mughal Emperors of Delhi. Akbar, Jahangir, and Shahjahan took Hindu Rajput girls into their harems as wives. Ranjit Singh also resorted to this strategy of political marriages when he merged the other *Misls* to consolidate

his Empire in the Punjab.

But in India we find this marriage business was not a very lasting solution. There were other obstacles and complications that defied solution. The success of the solution has depended not only on circumstances or conditions but very much on the mentality of the parties concerned.

Sometimes the solution was easy. When the Aryans, Dasyus, Pishachas, Hunas, Yueh Chis, Sakas, etc., came to India, they settled down in the country with an idea to remain here and became one of the people living here. In due course of time they lost all features of alienism and became Indians. Along with their language and culture which mainly centred round the modes of dining and wiving, these little streams merged lock, stock and barrel with the main all-assimilating sea of Hinduism. In the same way, towards the end of the eleventh century, the Normans of France invaded and conquered the English people. They settled down in England and began gradually to mix up with the local inhabitants until by the time of Richard II, the distinction between the conquerors and the vanquished disappeared.

But matter becomes complicated and solution difficult when the schism is caused by deep communal differences and religious convictions.

Turning over the pages of history, we find that once the Muslim sway extended right from the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic in the West. Towards the end of the 15th century, the Muslims lost their sway over Spain. They ceased to be the ruling class there, though they still comprised a considerable part of the Spanish population. The new rulers were Christians. They failed to bring about a working union between the two sections. The Christians solved the problem, if it could be called a solution at all, by calling upon the Muslims to become Christians or go out of the country, bag and baggage.

The Jews met with even worse fate from country to country. They are still being haunted and hunted about. In Spain and Portugal they met the same fate as the Muslims. In 1290, they were expelled from England, though they were later on, after almost five centuries

admitted into Parliament in 1858. They were granted equality in Germany in 1871, but it was taken away again before the first Great War. How mercilessly they were massacred by Hitler is too well-known. They met the same pitiable fate in Russia and Poland. As many as eight million (80 *lakhs*) Jews are said to have been done to death in Germany during Hitler's reign and the number in Russia and Poland may also be not very much less, but what is admirable is the brave fortitude, courage, persistent determination, and planned organisation with which they have stood against and borne these inhuman atrocities and massacres by the intolerant majorities throughout these long centuries. They have set an example and provided a lesson which is well worth learning and emulating by the unfortunate minorities throughout the world, including India.

Europe has not been able to assimilate either the Jews or the Muslims because of distinctions in religions and cultures that could not be compromised. Cultures being the main and visible obstacles. The Turks having realised that, are now in great hurry to adopt Western dress and manners and evolve their culture to meet the Europeans on their own level.

United States of America and South Africa have not so far been able to solve their problems of the white and the black. It is a rancour that persists to prick their body politics. In Northern Ireland also they have not been able to solve their problem of Roman Catholics and Protestants even to this day, though both the contenders are Christians.

### *Akbar's Solution*

It was the Mughal Emperor Akbar who made a serious and earnest effort to bring the different communities and schools of thought together. The impact of Islam on India began, almost seven hundred years before Akbar, with the Arab invasion of Sindh. When Mohammad Gouri conquered and established his headquarters in Delhi, the Muslims began to be domiciled here and became permanent part of the Indian population. With the conversion of local people, voluntary and forcibly, the Muslim population began to be as much Indian as the Hindus and other non-Muslims. Their

daily intercourse in life, mutual dealings, help and assistance, common sorrows and enjoyments, common dangers and safety, daily exchange of ideas, helped bring the people together. Having added large numbers of Hindus to their fold, the Muslims had begun by that time to cease to consider themselves as aliens. But they had kept their culture and Semitic base of their religion distinctly separate. People with intellect and farsight had begun to think of a rapprochement and a permanent reconciliation between the two. Akbar was the first ruler to have a vision of a united India with a population close-knit and united. He was not alone in it, nor was he the first to conceive of it. The whole genius of the age was with him. Akbar even tried to bring people over to a common faith which he called Din-e-Illahi, the Religion of God. But people become stiff and adamant where their religious beliefs are touched. So the attempt flopped. He then took to the way of peaceful penetration by approaching the people through the beauties of art and refinement of thought and language to obliterate the differences in cultures then prevailing in India. Havell said, "The Mohammedan rulers found in the practice of the arts and in the unprejudiced pursuit of learning for its own sake the best means of reconciling racial and religious differences." We find during Akbar's reign, Hindus and Muslims receiving the same treatment and equal status in the Mughal Court. Muslims began to study the Hindu books and the Hindus read Muslim books. Manners and dress and behaviour became mixed up. Persian and Arabic words began to be fitted into the framework of Hindi *Braj Bhasha*. This consequently developed into a common language in Northern India and during Shahjahan's time became prevalent as Urdu. It was the result of gradual assimilation of languages spoken by Muslims and Hindus. The imaginative descriptive genius of *Braj Bhasha* filled with the richness of realistic detail was immersed into the overflowing stream of reflective richness of Persian and Arabic metaphor. *Braj* was basically sculptural in design and execution while the other was beautifully pictorial, in a true mosaic fashion, with verse upon verse of exquisite diction, may be without any central unity. The virtues and beauties of both were combined in Urdu. Though it

received a set back during the post-Akbar period of bigoted court atmosphere, the writings of Mir Taqi, Hali, Azad and a host of others kept it alive, fit to become the national language of India. Urdu and Hindostani virtually came to mean the same thing. It had a better chance then because the vernaculars prevailing in India were much nearer to each other than now. The intervention of English as the common language of the literates had no affinity with the vernaculars, which, therefore, developed indigenous features of their own so much so that they looked quite alien to each other. While reading the compositions of Namdev, a Maharashtrian, Jaidev, a Bengali, and the Sikh Gurus from the Punjab, in the Guru Granth Sahib, no difficulty is felt to understand the others if anybody knows one of the languages. At the time of division of the country, Mr Gandhi shouted himself hoarse advocating the case of Hindostani for adoption as the '*lingua franca*' of the whole India. But the dutiful sons of the Father of the Nation refused to listen to his words of wisdom and have landed the country in a simmering, fermenting pot-full of languages. Today a Bengali or a Maharashtrian is linguistically far more distant to me, a Punjabi, than he was three centuries ago.

The other 'pincer movement' was through art, painting, architecture, dance and music, etcetera. Akbar's artistic tastes were a happy blending of the Hindu arts with those that Babar and Humayun brought along with them from Central Asia, their homeland. A really Indian national style was developed under his patronage and encouragement. Muslim and Hindu arts were harmoniously mingled to create an unprecedented beauty not only in architecture but in painting and music as well. Crossbreeds are usually more virile, handsome, and profound in outlook. The buildings, for instance, had to be vast in design to accommodate Muslim congregations as compared to the Hindu need of sparse space for their individual rituals. But Persian and Arabic structural and decorative styles were combined with the Hindu sculptural designs, bracketed cornices, balconies supported on brackets and surmounted with Muslim arches and domes. Agra and Fatehpur Sikari present an eclectic evidence of this new totally Indian style

evolved during the time of Akbar. After him it continued without break as we see its glamour in the Taj Mahal. The Harmandir, Golden Temple, at Amritsar, is another splendid sample of this newly evolved art. At the Court of Delhi, it received a set back when Aurangzeb began to employ only Muslim architects. But it survived as a permanent feature elsewhere, for example in Punjab being adopted by the Sikhs, in Rajasthan, Gujarat and other corners of native liberty.

In music also significant and well-conceived developments were introduced by noted musicians like Tansen in Akbar's Court. To make it more suitable to the Mohammedan taste and ear, he made even more departures from the traditional modes of Hindu conservative schools. The addition of *Khyal* to *Dhrupad* and *Dhamal* was a significant development that took place during that period. *Thumri* and *Dadra* were later contributions to the Indian music under Mohammedan patronage. The Sikh way of *kirtan* and *Gurmat Sangeet* is a significant result of this evolution of music which took place during this very period.

In painting also, the meditative mood and depth of expression in the old Indian tradition was blended with the brightness of colour, meticulous symmetry, and the virile spirit which the Muslims brought with them.

### *The Satguru's Solution*

When I said Akbar was not alone in his attempt to bring about unity in the country, I had in mind not only the gathering in large numbers of intellectual giants and genuine geniuses in different arts who adorned his Court in Delhi and were spread over different parts of India, but I had in mind the Court of the Sikh Satguru also in the Bari Doab area of the Punjab. Akbar's doings were undone in the Delhi Court by the bigotry of his great grandson, Aurangzeb. But the seed sown by the Sikh Gurus grew to be a large shady tree which bears fruit to this day.

The Satguru set this ideal when Akbar's grandfather Babar had put his first foot on this land. It was in fact Guru Nanak who first conceived of the idea to bring about harmony and peace through

art, culture, and tolerance, sowed the seed, and also saw it sprout. Akbar caught the idea and came all the way to Goindwal as a pilgrim to take lesson and study the developments in the Satguru's Court which he followed up at his Imperial Capital.

The idea of unity and integration of the country struck Guru Nanak at the first moment he laid the foundation of Sikhism, and raised the slogan, "There is no Hindu and no Musalman." It meant that everyone was a creation of God, His beloved sons and daughters, and it was wrong to divide them in various categories under various brands that quarrelled with one another. The Satguru taught :

It is the same spirit that pervadeth all.

ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥ (ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮ: ੧)

It is His Light which illuminates every being.

ਤਿਸਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

From One Light the whole universe was created; then whom to call good and whom bad.

ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੇ ਮੰਦੇ ॥

The Creation is in the Creator and in the Creation is the Creator, who pervadeth everywhere.

ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਖਲਕ ਖਲਕ ਮਹਿ ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸ੍ਵਥ ਠਾਂਈ ॥

The tenth Satguru explains it thus :

Some men are Hindus and others Musalmans among whom are Rafazis, Imams, and Shafis.

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੋਊ ਰਾਫ਼ਜ਼ੀ ਇਮਾਮ ਸਾਫ਼ੀ,

Know that all men are of the same caste.

ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ ॥

The Creator (Hindu word *Karta*) and the Beneficent (Muslim word *Karim*) is the same. So is the Provider (in Persian *Razak*) and the Merciful (*Rahim*) the same.

ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੀਮ ਸੋਈ ਰਾਜਕ ਰਹੀਮ ਓਈ

Let no one even by mistake suppose there is any difference.

ਦੂਸਰੇ ਨ ਭੇਦ ਕੋਈ ਭੂਲ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਮਾਨਬੋ ।

The temple and the mosque are the same. The Hindu worship and the Musalman prayer are the same.



ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਔ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਓਈ

All men are the same. It is through error they appear different.

ਮਾਨਸ ਸਬੈ ਏਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕੁ ਕੇ ਭੁਭਾਉ ਹੈ ।

Deities, demons, Yakshas, heavenly singers, Musalmans and Hindus,

ਦੇਵਤਾ ਅਦੇਵ ਜੱਛ ਰੰਧੂਬ ਤੁਰਕ ਹਿੰਦੂ

adopt the customary dress of their different countries.

ਨਿਆਰੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਦੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਸ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ ।

All men have the same eyes, similar ears, the same body, the same build,

ਏਕੈ ਨੈਨ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਨ ਏਕੈ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਨ

a compound of earth, air, fire, and water.

ਖਾਕ ਬਾਦ ਆਤਸ ਔ ਆਬ ਕੇ ਰਲਾਉ ਹੈ ।

Allah and Abhekh are the same; the Puran and the Quran are the same;

ਅਲਹ ਅਭੇਖ ਸੋਈ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਔ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਓਈ ।

they are all alike, it is the one Creator God who created all.

ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਬੈ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਬਨਾਉ ਹੈ । (ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਪਾ : ੧੦)

The guiding principle was :

There is only One Loving Master, the rest are all His consorts. One who is likened by the Master is the best.

ਏਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਿਉ ਸਖੀਆ ਸਭ ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਭਾਵੈ ਪਿਰ ਸਾ ਭਲੀ ॥ (ਦੇਵ ਗੰਧਾਰੀ ਮ : ੪)

The Guru knew too well that there could be no conscious combination or compromise in the sphere of religion. People react and resist and become adamant when touched on any string of their faith and belief. So the cultural ideas lying behind religion were mainly handled. But the Satguru observed that permanent solution could not be evolved by cutting out and bypassing religion altogether. The beliefs in religious faiths were too deep-rooted to be ignored and brushed aside. This hurdle was crossed by advocating complete and honest tolerance. The Guru impressed upon everyone to adhere to his religion but remain truthful both in thought and action and always God-conscious. In tolerance, Sikhism stands unequalled. The holy Sikh Scripture, Sri Guru

Granth Sahib, contains, besides the divinely inspired compositions of the Gurus, sayings and spiritual experiences of thirty-five other men-of-God. Amongst these thirty-five persons, we find those who had faith in different religions, came from different parts of the country, and belonged to various castes and creeds. They are Hindus, Muslims, and also those who were regarded as untouchables. The Satguru gave all of them equal status and seated them by his side on the same throne. The Sikh Scripture contains such commands as are instances of synthesis, the like of which cannot be found in any Scripture in the world. The following are some excerpts addressed to the Musalmans telling them how to become true believers :

Make actions the land, sow the word as seed, and irrigate it with the water of Truth.

ਅਮਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਬੀਜੁ ਸਬਦੇ ਕਰਿ ਸਚ ਕੀ ਆਬ ਨਿਤ ਦੇਹਿ ਪਾਣੀ ॥

Never think that the Master can be approached by sheer talk.

ਮਤੁ ਜਾਣੁ ਸਹਿ ਗਲੀ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮ: ੧)

Let mercy be the mosque, faith thy prayer mat, and honest living thy Quran;

ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਰੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

Self-control thy circumcision and loving behaviour thy fast, and thus you could become a true Musalman.

ਸਰਮ ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ॥

Clean actions be thy Qaba, Truth thy Teacher, and deeds thy prayer.

ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਬਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਕਲਮਾ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥

And if your rosary be His Will, the Lord will preserve thy honour.

ਤਸਬੀ ਸਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਖੈ ਲਾਜ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮ: ੧)

Another's due is like pork (for a Musalman) and beef (for a Hindu).

ਹਰੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥

The Guru-Teacher will extend His support if one does not live on dishonesty.

ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਾਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥

Mere talk will not take one to heaven. Only truthful living will emancipate.

ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥

Condiments cannot turn forbidden meat into pure food.

ਮਾਰਣੁ ਪਾਹਿ ਹਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

Nanak, through false talk only falsehood is gathered.

ਨਾਨਕ ਗਲੀ ਕੂੜੀਈ ਕੂੜੇ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮ : ੧)

There are five prayers with five names and said on five different times of the day.

ਪੰਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਵਖਤ ਪੰਜਿ ਪੰਜਾ ਪੰਜੇ ਨਾਉ ॥

Let Truth be the first, honest living the second, and prayer to God for the good of all the third.

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਹਲਾਲ ਦੁਇ ਤੀਜਾ ਖੈਰ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥

Let fourth be right intentions in the mind and fifth the praises of the Lord.

ਚਉਥੀ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਜਵੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਨਾਇ ॥

Let deeds be thy prayer and thus could you be called a Musalman.

ਕਰਣੀ ਕਲਮਾ ਆਖਿ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਸਦਾਇ ॥

Nanak, all those who are deceitful will earn falsehood.

ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇਤੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਕੂੜੈ ਕੂੜੀ ਪਾਇ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮ : ੧)

Farid says, they are like dogs who do not offer prayers; it is not a good way,

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬੇਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਕੁਤਿਆ ਏਹ ਨ ਭਲੀ ਰੀਤਿ ॥

for they never visit the mosque five times.

ਕਬਹੀ ਚਲਿ ਨ ਆਇਆ ਪੰਜੇ ਵਖਤ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥

O Farid ! get up early, perform ablutions and say prayers.

ਉਨੁ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਉਜੁ ਸਾਜਿ ਸੁਬਹ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਿ ॥

Chop off the head that does not bow before the Master.

ਜੇ ਸਿਰੁ ਸਾਂਢੀ ਨਾ ਨਿਵੈ ਸੇ ਸਿਰੁ ਕਪਿ ਉਤਾਰਿ ॥ (Shlok Farid)

Similarly, the followers of other religions, sects, and schools of thought are also addressed and impressed upon to be truthful believers in their *dharams*. For instance, a *Sanyasi* is told to be a true *Sanyasi* :

O man, practise asceticism in this way.

ਰੇ ਮਨ ਐਸੇ ਕਰਿ ਸੰਨਿਆਸਾ ।

Consider dwelling places as forests, and remain an anchorite at heart.

ਬਨ ਸੇ ਸਦਨ ਸਬੈ ਕਰਿ ਸਮਝਹੁ ਮਨ ਹੀ ਮਾਹਿ ਉਦਾਸਾ ।

Make self-control thy matted hair, union with God thine ablutions, and daily religious observances the growth of thy nails.

ਜਤ ਕੀ ਜਟਾ ਜੋਗ ਕੇ ਮਜਨ ਨੇਮ ਕੇ ਨਖਨ ਬਢਾਓ ।

Divine knowledge thy spiritual guide, instruct the mind and apply Naam as ashes to thy body.

ਗਿਆਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਤਮ ਉਪਦੇਸਹੁ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਭੂਤ ਲਗਾਓ ।

Eat little, sleep little, love mercy and forbearance.

ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ ਸੁਲਪ ਸੀ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਦਇਆ ਛਿਮਾ ਤਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ।

Ever practice loving behaviour and patience and you will be freed from the three qualities.

ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਬਾਹਿ ਬੇ ਹੈਬੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਗੁਣ ਅਤੀਤਿ ।

Attach not the mind to lust, wrath, ego, covetousness, obstinacy, and worldly love.

ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਲੋਭ ਹਠ ਮੋਹਿ ਨ ਮਨ ਸਿਉ ਲਯਾਵੈ ।

Thus you will attain to the Truthful Realith and obtain the Supreme Being.

ਤਬ ਹੀ ਆਤਮ ਤਤ ਕੋ ਦਰਸੈ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਹ ਪਾਵੈ । (ਰਾਗ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਪਾ : ੧੦)

In the same way, a Yogi is impressed upon to be a true Yogi in the following words :

O man, practise Jog in this way;

ਰੇ ਮਨ ਇਹ ਬਿਧ ਜੋਗ ਕਮਾਓ ।

Make truth thy horn, sincerity thy necklace and apply meditation as ashes to your body;

ਸਿੰਝੀ ਸਾਚ ਅਕਪਟ ਕੰਠਲਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਬਿਭੂਤ ਚੜਾਓ ।

Make restraint of the mind the lyre, and the support of the *Naam* your alms;

ਤਾਤੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਤਮ ਬਸ ਕਰ ਕੀ ਭਿਛਾ ਨਾਮ ਅਧਾਰੰ ।

Strike the strings of Primal Reality, and you will hear the Divine sweet music.

ਬਾਜੈ ਪਰਮ ਤਾਰ ਤਤ ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਉਪਜੈ ਰਾਗ ਰਸਾਰੰ ।

Practise tunes of Divine knowledge and waves of sweet melody and rapturous pleasure will be produced.

ਉਘਟੇ ਤਾਨ ਤਰੰਗ ਰੰਗ ਅਤਿ ਗਿਆਨ ਗੀਤ ਬੰਧਾਨੰ ।

Demons and demigods in their celestial carriers will be amazed and Munis intoxicated.

ਚਕਿ ਚਕਿ ਰਹੇ ਦੇਵ ਦਾਨਵ ਮੁਨਿ ਛਕਿ ਛਕਿ ਬਿਯੋਮ ਬਿਮਾਨੰ ।

Admonish the mind, don the garb of restraint, and utter the name in quietness,

ਆਤਮ ਉਪਦੇਸ ਭੇਸ ਸੰਜਮ ਕੋ ਜਾਪ ਸੁ ਅਜਪਾ ਜਾਪੈ ।

So the body will ever shine like gold, and time will have no effect.

ਸਦਾ ਰਹੈ ਕੰਚਨ ਸੀ ਕਾਇਆ ਕਾਲ ਨ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਬਿਆਪੈ ।

(ਗਗ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਪਾ : ੧੦)

Nowhere else could one find such forceful and impressive preaching and guidance to the followers of another religion to be firm in and true to their beliefs.

Along with the Satguru are seated in the Sikh Scripture, Ravidas the shoemaker, Namdev, the calico printer, Kabir the Muslim weaver, Mardana and Satta and Balwand, Mohammedan musicians, Farid the Muslim Sufi Shaikh, and others from Bengal, Maharashtra, Eastern U.P., and other places. And it is before the whole holy assembly of them all that the Sikhs pay homage and obeisance when they bow before Sri Guru Granth Sahib. No comparison to such tolerance and humanism could be found anywhere else in the world religions.

### *Impact*

About five centuries of intercourse between Islam and Hinduism in India had resulted in mutual exchange of some features acceptable to both sides. These were not only in the sphere of culture and social behaviours, but also effected to some extent the religious beliefs and observances. Superstitions, whims, talismans, ghosts and spirits, *Pirs* and occultists, devils and bad spirits and the ways to whisk them away, and ward off against their evil effects, shrines, *Takias*, tombs, and mausoleums of men with some following, petty gods and spiritual juggernauts, had become common to a great extent. We have a shrine to this day under the patronage of the Nawab Sahib at Malerkotla, where Sikhs, Hindus,

and Mohammedans all repair in crowds to pay homage every Thursday. Good and useful things were appreciated and adopted voluntarily by each side through daily intercourse. Muslim way of life in worldly comforts was superior to Indian way. Naturally, therefore, it was right to imitate them in certain things like the use of fruit (fresh and dry), cups and saucers, gardens and libraries, rugs and curtains to decorate the rooms and above all — dress. Before the advent of the Mohammedans, the Indians generally put a piece of cloth around their loins and went naked otherwise or were clad in a long piece thrown round their shoulders, the *Dhoti*. The dress we wear, tailored and draped, is a heritage given to us by the Mohammedans.

### *Emergence of Sikh Influence*

This took place besides the obstacle created in this development by the priest class, both the Brahmin and the Mullah. The liberal ideas of Sufism rendered significant help to bring Muslims and Hindus nearer to each other. They soldered to a great extent the crease that cleaved the two communities. The Sufi saints were venerated equally by the Muslims and Hindus. They showed a way that completely bypassed the priest class. This impact of Islam and Sufism on Hinduism produced a fermentation in thought, which when churned, brought out a new system of views about God and man shared by all the communities. This 'butter', which was churned up, when cultured, cleaned, pasteurized, matured and fortified, became one with Sikhism. Most prominent points thus evolved were — (1) Unity of God in place of gods and goddesses; (2) Repudiation of caste and untouchability; (3) Assertion of Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man; (4) Love and devotion rather than knowledge, works, or rituals to be the basis of religion; (5) Necessity of a teacher instead of a priest class; and (6) Use of vernacular in prayer and worship instead of Sanskrit or Arabic. God itself remained no longer an abstract entity of the Aryan conception or a Being outside and above Nature as the Semitic people thought, but became a Personal Being at once Immanent and Transcendent, the Absolute Ultimate Truth.

The Sufi saints came very close to the Sikhs and Sikhism and were so much loved and revered that Saint Mian Mir was brought all the way from Lahore to Amritsar to lay the foundation stone of the Golden Temple, when Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth Nanak, started the construction of Harimandar.

The art and architecture of the Golden Temple is a unique and superb presentation of the Indo-Persian cultural synthesis that evolved in 16th century Hindustan. With its lovely kiosks (*chhatris*) with fluted metal cupolas that decorate the parapets, projections, and angles, the embowed windows supported on carved brackets and elliptical cornices, the arches decorated with foliations, and the low fluted collarless golden central dome, and with its marble walls inlaid with exquisite floral designs painted or embossed in metal and precious stones and decorated with attractive fresco paintings supported with exquisite works in *Jaratkari* and *Dehin* forms of the Sikh School in which Sikh draftsmen excelled, which decorate the walls of the Golden Temple, it stands as a monumental piece of art and can compare with any select piece appearing on the famous Taj Mahal of Agra.

Standing in the midst of a clear pool, it stands as an unrivalled specimen of Indo-Persian art evolved under the initiative and patronage of the Sikh Gurus and early Mughal Rulers. The art and architecture of the Golden Temple are generally followed while constructing Sikh gurdwaras of note.

In Sikh music also, the blending of the ancient system of Hindu *sangeet* with modifications to suit the taste and ear of the 16th century created by Mohammedan impact is distinct. *Rabab* was the first instrument selected by the founder of the Sikh religion to be played by his Mohammaden companion. *Rabab* was a Central Asian instrument. The induction and popularization of *Ragas* like the *Asa*, *Suhi*, and *Tilang* in the Sikh *kirtan* worship testifies to the Muslim impact. It will be worth noting that the musicians at the Sikh congregations during the Sikh Guru period were invariably Muslims, called *Rababis*. They remained the assets and masters of this fine art in the Golden Temple, the central Sikh seat of worship, and other places till the unfortunate partition of Punjab in

1947. This blending of Hindu-Muslim music was initiated by Guru Nanak Dev during Babar's time and was later taken up also by Tansen in Akbar's court.

Similarly, the mixture in the language is a masterly blending of the two into common man's language, Punjabi. Persian and Sanskrit and even Arabic words besides other dialects were freely used in *Gurbani* after due and proper Punjabi-iation. There are compositions in such distinct Punjabi-ied Persian and Sanskrit in the Guru Granth Sahib, that it is rightly called "the first great Scripture of Synthesis."

### *The Setback*

After the death of Akbar, this laudable work was to some extent carried on by his son Jahangir and grandson Shahjahan. The structures of Taj Mahal at Agra, the Red Fort at Delhi, and others (after Fatehpur Sikri) are monumental examples of this. Some retrogression had started being noticed here and there after the passing away of Akbar, but there was a complete setback during the reign of his great-grandson, Aurangzeb who undid everything that Akbar had taken such pains to do.

Aurangzeb issued instructions that no architect be employed who was not a Mohammedan and banned music in his Empire. This created again a schism in art which Akbar had tried to close up. The fanatic bigotry of Aurangzeb brought down monstrous tyranny on those who were not Muslims and even on those who were not Sunni Muslims. This was the beginning of the end of the Mughal Empire which collapsed when Farrukhsiyar under communal frenzy, resorted to persecution and conversion of non-Muslims to Islam forcibly.

Indo-Persian cultural synthesis had thus been evolved in the 16th century and as a result, use of the vernacular in naming objects and buildings had become a common practice. The Sunehra Mahal in Akbar's Fatehpur Sikri which has its pillars carved with images of Hindu deities and other works of art are thus, standing monuments of the amity that had been brought about. All this was brought to naught by later Mughals, Aurangzeb downward. This



crack which Akbar tried to weld with Guru Nanak's formula of harmony and coexistence, began to appear again and continued to widen.

Later on we find reversion to the old moorings, prejudices, differences, and confrontations. This revival is of sectional cultures of pre-Muslim impacts in India. The Hindus started looking back to purely Mathura and Brindaban cultures and the Muslims towards Samarkand and Bukhara. The Hindus began to sing of the *koil* (cuckoo bird) and the Muslims of *bulbul* (Persian nightingale). Muslim buildings began to appear in distinctly Saracenic-style of architecture, while the Hindus began to build their *ashrams* and public buildings in purely Hindu style, carefully avoiding the use of arches and domes. Similar became the fate of pictorial art. Painters of Bengal were producing expressionless art. It may be perfectly Hindu in keeping with the meditative mood of old India. But it fails to take cognisance of the change brought about by the virile west, both Muslim and European, in India. While Muslim painters like Chughtai have become more fond of colour and less of depth of expression, only the Sikh painters like Thakur Singh and Sobha Singh remained realistic and kept the two effects combined. The naming of places like Brindaban Gardens, Hotel Shiraz, etc., are indications of the widening schism. The same is happening to philosophy with the cry "back to the ancient days" forgetting the work and contribution of medieval men-of-God, who combined the best in both and created a sense of joy in life and worldly duties. Even the language is not being spared. The *Rashtrya Bhasha* is being developed on purely Hindu lines and crammed with Sanskrit words and idioms, as if the Muslims and other non-Hindu people had nothing to do with it. This harking back to purely Hindu times in India and the Muslim times outside India, is aptly likened, by a learned friend, to an ill-married couple who destroy all chances of present love and happiness by talking too much of the past life enjoyed by each, away from one another, long before they had met. This resulted in movements called *Sangthan* and *Tanzeem* started by Bhai Parmanand and Mr Jinnah. This did the worst service to India.

Ultimately, this has resulted in the partition of the country. And still we do not take any lesson from it. With all our parochialism, provincialism, regionalism, lingualism, Indianisation which is only a covering for Hinduisation and in other words means the cult and culture of the U.P. revolving around Ayodhya and Banars in the east and Mathura and Brindaban in the west of the province and the tales of their ancient rulers, and with slogans instigating one class of people against another, and insulation of the so-called depressed and other sections of the community into permanent distinct compartments, we are not proceeding towards integration and unity in the country, but are creating cracks after cracks and new schisms and may even be heading towards disintegration of the country.

### *Base of the Sikh Way of Life*

This formula to bring about peace, harmony, and co-existence through unity of tolerance and culture was evolved by Guru Nanak in the beginning of the 16th century. Eventually, though this movement could not be continued on the political plane as the subsequent rulers drew greater dividends from the policy of divide and rule. This formula, evolved by the founder of Sikhism, formed a part of the Satguru's way of life, having been inextricably interwoven in it.

In Sikh art, culture, music, painting, architecture, everywhere this synthesis of different cultures is prominently visible. Not only that, even the language, Punjabi, and the worship as well as Sikh religion, have grown and blossomed emitting fragrance of this synthesis. The sacred Scripture of the Sikhs stands unequalled as the Book of Synthesis in which Farid, Kabir, Ravidas, Nam Dev, Dhanna, and others of high and low castes coming from north, south, east and west of the country have been given equal status with the Satguru. It was never thought that they had different beliefs and religious loyalties.

During the first World War, a meeting of the Historical Society was held in Barnes Court at Shimla. It used to be the residence of the Punjab Governor. Sir Michael O'Dwyer was then

the Lt. Governor who presided over that meeting in which Sir Jogendra Singh read a paper on Guru Nanak. Malik Sir Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana remarked that Guru Nanak was as much theirs as of the Sikhs. That is why the Muslims got half of the sheet of the cloth that was left behind by the Guru after his passing away. At the end, Sir Michael O'Dwyer said that at that time Christians were not present, otherwise, they would also have laid their claim and wrested their part of the holy sheet.

It will be worth noting that we sometimes do have communal riots in the country and also hear about riots, etc., or rioting by anti-social elements. These communal riots are always between Hindus and Muslims. But we have never heard so far of any communal riot between Sikhs and Hindus or between Sikhs and Muhammedans anywhere. If the Sikhs have intervened anywhere it has been to provide relief, rescue, or shelter to the needy. This is the proof of success of the formula.

If, therefore, unity and integration are to be brought about in the country, some such formula will have to be found as Guru Nanak evolved and Akbar adopted.

## MARYADA

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There is no special spiritual sanctity attached to *maryada* in Sikhism. But it is like a Constitution of a civilised and organised government of a country, to which loyalty is sworn. It has been formed and has been evolved from time to time by the Sikhs as a whole called '*Panth*'. It is the centre around which the whole organisation revolves and keeps together. Without a Constitution or rules and regulations no society, or individual can properly function. Without this regulation everything becomes a total chaos. It is a matter of strategy for protection and advancement of the Sikhs, to co-ordinate and integrate and keep them on the path. *Maryada* has evolved and changed according to the requirements, needs and conditions through which the *Panth* has been passing. It will have to adapt itself and change in future also when necessity and urgency of a situation calls. A static constitution is always fatal to the cause. Our *maryada*, therefore, has to be dynamic and a living pulsating and functioning Constitution. But it has to conform to and be sub-servient to the spirits and tenets laid down in the Satguru's *Shabd* incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib.

If everybody begins to have a free hand at the *maryada* and starts ritualising and corrupting it according to one's individual whims and caprices, it will be very dangerous for the integrity of the *Panth*. Such a liberty may bring about disruption and disintegration. Strict enforcement of the current *maryada* is, therefore, very necessary.

Questions sometimes are posed that the Satguru directed his tirade mainly against ritualism, formalism, institutionalised

religion, regimented society, and exhibitionary symbols and forms. Then how can the imposition of strict *maryada* be justified amongst the Sikhs. The question is valid and requires proper understanding. If Sikhism were an individualistic and isolationist concern, it would have been quite different. There would then be no need for any forms or symbols or any strict *maryada*. But Sikhism as envisaged and taught by the Guru is to be an organised force of individuals having un-swerving faith and anchor in God and Guru and dedicated to upholding and advancing righteousness, to extirpate evil, and evil-doers, and to work for nobility in the world. For enlarging the scope and effectiveness of such a work, organised effort is of foremost importance. It is beyond any individual to take up and carry such a work to the desired end. It must be a conjoint and co-operative effort of the whole body if success is to be achieved. To bring people together and to keep them in an integrated unit to enable them to march forward and progress with enthusiasm and in spirit of joyful attachment to the cause and themselves, organised discipline is valuable and a pre-requisite. To keep up such a zealous enthusiasm, imagination and sentiments have to be kept worked up. To keep up the ideas and beliefs in an operative mood, some forms and external symbols are helpful necessities. They must not be dead and obsolete. To be a living index of his mission and idea, they should be vivid reminders of the personality that governs his faith and actions. They should be reflections of his inner belief and convictions as tears are related to grief and smiles to happiness. We have to guard against tears and smiles becoming camouflages for hypocrisy. As long as their inner meaning and spirit is real and alive, they always serve a very useful purpose and make the ideal real and workable. If such forms are imposed not for requirement of uniformity and integration, but by local and racial influences and pressure, they tend to narrow down the ideal and create divisions. If the spirit within is lost, such outside forms become sheer obstacles and should better be abandoned. It was this conception which exposed the outmodedness of customs and forms then prevailing in the Hindu society. Taking food in "cooking squares", the caste system, the distinctive features of the

sacred thread, and the differentiation between high and low castes, all led to exclusiveness and became hindrances to the spiritual advancement of individuals and alienated the people from God. The Satguru's mission was, therefore, to remove such obstacles. The Sikh forms were not meant as an essential aid to the spiritual advancement of the soul. They were conceived and determined for preservation of the corporate life of the community. There is no bar on an individual soul to be inspired by and to love God without adopting these forms but they become a must if the individual has to advance not only for his ownself but also for the good of others as well as progress in the company of the Guru and the *sangat*. For such joint action, the Sikhs who are the embodiment of the Guru and are thus surcharged with his personality, get inspired by the uniform worn and ordained by him. This creates an everlasting association with an ever-living Personality that is itself a symbol of the Highest Personality. As is God, so is the Guru, and as is the Guru so must be the Sikh.

Besides keeping up the *esprit de corps*, *maryada* has to play another important role. It is like a moat and ramparts of a fort to safeguard and protect the spirit within. This has been of special utility and importance to the Sikhs and Sikhism. They had to face struggle and opposition from two fronts. Semitic and Aryan systems were both to be contended with. Semitic attack was straight and frontal. Their bigoted fanaticism and brute tyranny had to be faced. Though it was a long drawn and bloody conflict, yet the Sikhs were able to stand against it and ultimately were victorious in the struggle. But the Aryan or the Hindu onslaught is surreptitious, veiled, and orchestrated both from within and outside. The Sikhs had to contend with Hindu fifth columnists and traitors in their own ranks. The Mohammedans wanted openly to convert the Sikhs to Islam. This the Sikhs resisted very successfully and valiantly. But there is a section of the Hindus who want to assimilate the Sikhs and wipe out their image and identity. This point is dealt with in detail elsewhere. If the Sikhs were saved, it was due to their *maryada* which enjoined upon them to keep their hair intact.

*Kes* and beard are a spiritual and mystical link between a

Sikh and the Guru. If the uncut hair and beard were not there to protect us, the Hindu intolerant communalist majority would have devoured us long ago. One is astonished to see sometimes seemingly sensible people in Sikh form who are impatient and dying to see this protecting hand removed so that they are free to get rid of their beard and *kes*. But they fail to advance any cogent reason as to what will they gain by doing so, except that they will be free to go about unnoticed with their girl friends. I have discussed this point with youngsters who have lived abroad for considerable periods. My own son Sikandar Singh has been in Canada for almost nine years. He was first in the University of Western Ontario and after getting his Master's degree he has been doing a job in Montreal. So he has experienced different lives there, of a student and of a worker. He tells me that there is no difficulty that one comes across abroad at all on account of long *kes* and beard. He has moved even in the highest society there and has been visiting the Government House at Ottawa to call on the Governor-General who is a friend of our family, but he had never felt any awkwardness or sense of inferiority nor was he ever treated differently or with discrimination anywhere on account of his beard and uncut *kes*. So if they stand as a check on our going wrong, they deserve to be thanked and cherished as our saviours.

It is on these bases that the Sikh *maryada* has been formed, evolved, and enforced.

## ARDAS

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In Sikh life, *Ardas* is the most important and potent item. *Ardas* is derived from Persian word '*Arazdashat*', meaning a request, a supplication, prayer and application. In Sikh life, *Ardas*, in some form or other, is offered at almost every step, at the beginning and end of every work, ceremony, function, adventure, or even when going out and returning home.

It is important to determine and keep in mind to whom the *Ardas* is to be addressed. Sometimes people address the Guru even with different names connected with the place and purpose of the *Ardas*, sometimes to Guru Granth Sahib and sometimes, of course, to God, *Akal Purakh*, *Waheguru*. This reflects confusion of thought. We should be clear in our mind that according to the Guru's teachings, we have to pray to one Akal Purakh (ਪੂਜਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ). *Ardas* is, therefore, to be addressed only and solely to God Almighty. This has to be done by holding the Guru's Lotus Feet and supplicating under His protection, patronage, and following. Thus we get into the presence of *Waheguru*, the God-Guru. The more we get near Him and in His presence, the more effective and fruitful our request will become. The nearer we go the more we will be heard. It is then :

*Ardas* of the faithful never goes in vain.

ਬਿਰਥੀ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਨ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥ (ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ : ੫)

To whom the *Ardas* is to be addressed, there are very clear injunctions in the Holy Granth :

Offer your *Ardas* to the Giver of joy, the Destroyer of fear,



ਸੁਖ ਦਾਤਾ ਭੈ ਭੰਜਨੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਕਰਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥

When the merciful God extends His Grace, all affairs will be set right.

ਮਿਹਰ ਕਰੇ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨੁ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਰਜ ਆਵੈ ਰਾਸਿ ॥ (ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮ: ੫)

He Himself knows and He Himself does and He Himself sets things right.

ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਕਰੇ ਆਪਿ ਆਪੇ ਆਣੇ ਰਾਸਿ ॥

Nanak says; offer thy prayers in His august presence.

ਤਿਸੈ ਅਗੈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਖਲਿਓ ਕੀਚੈ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥ (ਰਾਗ ਮਾਰੂ, ਸਲੋਕ ਮ: ੨)

When offering *Ardas*, before getting into His presence, it is essential to mould the mind and bring it into an attitude and mood of faithful devotion and gratefulness. To bring the mind into this mood, no essay or a thesis can be so effective as to melt the mind and mould it into proper mood as the fourth *Ashatpadi* of the fifth Satguru's *Sukhmani* :

Mortal, think of the wonders of the goodness of God !

ਰਮਈਆ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਚੇਤਿ ਪਰਾਨੀ ॥

From what base origins He has brought you out to be what you are !

ਕਵਨ ਮੂਲ ਤੇ ਕਵਨ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਾਨੀ ॥

How He made you, fashioned you and adorned you !

ਜਿਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਸਾਜਿ ਸਵਾਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰਿਆ ॥

How He kept you safe in the fire of the womb !

ਗਰਭ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਜਿਨਹਿ ਉਬਾਰਿਆ ॥

When you were a baby He gave you milk to drink;

ਬਾਰਿ ਬਿਵਸਥਾ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਪਿਆਰੈ ਦੂਧ ॥

And in full grown youth He gave you tasteful food and comforts, and the sense to enjoy them.

ਭਰਿ ਜੋਬਨ ਭੋਜਨ ਸੁਖ ਸੂਧ ॥

You grew old, and there were friends and relations to attend on you,

ਬਿਰਧਿ ਭਇਆ ਊਪਰਿ ਸਾਕ ਸੈਨ ॥

And to feed and nurse you in your bed.

ਮੁਖਿ ਅਪਿ ਆਉ ਬੈਠ ਕਉ ਦੈਨ ॥

O Lord ! this worthless man will not appreciate Thy goodness;

ਇਹੁ ਨਿਰਗੁਨੁ ਗੁਨੁ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਬੂਝੈ ॥

Thy mercy alone will open his understanding.

ਬਖਸਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੀਝੈ ॥

By His Grace you live in comfort on the earth,

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਧਰਉਪਰਿ ਸੁਖਿ ਬਸਹਿ ॥

And enjoy the company of your wife and children,  
brothers and friends.

ਸੁਤ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ ਮੀਤ ਬਨਿਤਾ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਸਹਿ ॥

His Grace provides you with cool water to drink,

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਸੀਤਲ ਜਲਾ ॥

And soothing winds to blow on you, and priceless fire to  
serve you.

ਸੁਖਦਾਈ ਪਵਨੁ ਪਾਵਰੁ ਅਮੁਲਾ ॥

His Grace provides you different pleasure to enjoy.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਭੋਗਹਿ ਸਭਿ ਰਸਾ ॥

And all kinds of necessities to live with.

ਸਗਲ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਬਸਾ ॥

He has given you hands, feet, ears, eyes and tongue !

ਦੀਨੇ ਹਸਤ ਪਾਵ ਕਰਨ ਨੇਤ੍ਰ ਰਸਨਾ ॥

And yet you would leave Him Who gives these blessings  
and attach yourself to others !

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਅਵਰ ਸੰਗਿ ਰਚਨਾ ॥

This blind fool has fallen victim to ingratitude;

ਐਸੇ ਦੋਖ ਮੂੜ ਅੰਧ ਬਿਆਪੇ ॥

O Lord ! save him by Thine Grace.

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾਢਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਆਪੇ ॥

He who keeps him safe throughout his life,

ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਜੋ ਰਾਖਨਹਾਰੁ ॥

Is not loved at all by the boor.

ਤਿਸ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਨ ਕਰੈ ਗਵਾਰੁ ॥

Whose service brings him wealth of earth and heaven !

ਜਾਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਵ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

How foolish of man that he should not feel drawn towards  
Him,

ਤਾ ਸਿਉ ਮੂੜਾ ਮਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਲਾਵੈ ॥

Who is ever and ever present before his eyes !

ਜੋ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਸਦ ਸਦਾ ਹਜ਼ੂਰੇ ॥

How blind of him to think Him far away,

ਤਾ ਕਉ ਅੰਧਾ ਜਾਨਤ ਦੂਰੇ ॥

Whose service would exalt him in heaven.

ਜਾਕੀ ਟਹਲ ਪਾਵੈ ਦਰਗਹ ਮਾਨੁ ॥

The ignorant fool forgets the Lord,

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਬਿਸਾਰੈ ਮੁਗਧੁ ਅਜਾਨੁ ॥

This man will always be remiss, O Lord !

ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਹੁ ਭੂਲਨਹਾਰੁ ॥

Out of Thy infinite mercy take him under Thy protection.

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਖਨਹਾਰੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥

Thou art the Master; to Thee I pray.

ਤੂੰ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥

My body and soul are Thy gifts to start life with.

ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਸਭੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ ॥

Thou art the Father, Thou the Mother, and we Thy children !

ਤੁਮ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੇਰੇ ॥

We draw manifold blessings from Thy Grace.

ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਮਹਿ ਸੂਖ ਘਨੇਰੇ ॥

None knows Thy extent :

ਕੋਇ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ॥

Thou art the highest of the high.

ਉਚੇ ਤੇ ਉਚਾ ਭਗਵੰਤ ॥

All creation is strung on Thy Will :

ਸਗਲ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਸੁਤ੍ਰਿ ਧਾਰੀ ॥

It has to accept all that comes from Thee.

ਤੁਮ ਤੇ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਆਗਿਆਕਾਰੀ ॥

Thou alone knowest what informs Thy purposes.

ਤੁਮਰੀ ਗਤਿ ਮਿਤਿ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਜਾਨੀ ॥

I am ever and ever a sacrifice unto Thee.

ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸ ਸਦਾ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ॥

To address an *Ardas*, no priest or any special person is required. Anybody, man or woman, old or young, can lead in prayer. No ceremony whether religious or secular is complete without it. Sometimes, some ceremonies and rituals contain nothing but *Ardas*.

This is, therefore, available to everybody, rich or poor, high or low. The *Ardas* varies in size and content. A man going out on horseback, with one foot in the stirrup, or stepping into an automobile, may mutter to himself, "O Lord, of the plume ! help Thy servants." Sometimes a few lines from the scriptures by way of thanksgiving are uttered before or after meals. A person coming home after the day's work when puts his foot inside the entrance door, with a deep breath of relief, invokes the Satguru's Grace by ejaculating just two words : "*Dhann* Guru Nanak", the Great Guru Nanak. The Satguru has given us the conception of the Supreme Being as a Personal God. A Sikh moves in Him like a fish in the water. It is through *Ardas* that a Sikh remains in constant touch and communion with God.

The *Ardas* which is addressed formally at Sikh gatherings is given below :

Hail the One Supreme being the God-Guru Who is always victorious :

ੴ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਿਹ ।

May God help us !

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ ।

Ode to God by the tenth Master.

ਵਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ ।

Having first remembered God the Almighty, think of Guru Nanak.

ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਕੈ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਈਂ ਧਿਆਇ ।

Then of Angad Guru and Amar Das, and Ram Das; may they help us :

ਫਿਰ ਅੰਗਦ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਰਾਮਦਾਸੈ ਹੋਈਂ ਸਹਾਇ ।

Remember Arjun, Hargobind and the Holy Har Rai.

ਅਰਜਨ ਹਰਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨੇ ਸਿਮਰੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਰਾਇ ।

Let us think of Sri Harkrishan whose sight dispels all sorrows.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਜਿਸ ਡਿਠੇ ਸਭ ਦੁਖ ਜਾਇ ।

Remember Teg Bahadur, and untold prosperity shall hasten to our homes !

ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਿਮਰਿਐ ਘਰ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਆਵੈ ਧਾਇ ।

May they all help us everywhere.

ਸਭ ਥਾਈਂ ਹੋਇ ਸਹਾਇ ।

Note : The above six verses are taken from the beginning of *Bhagauti-ki-Var* by Guru Gobind Singh. There can be no alteration of any word or vowel in the above lines.

May the tenth King, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the Lord of the plume, and protector of the Faith, help us everywhere.  
ਦਸਵਾਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ, ਕਲਗੀਧਰ, ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਵਾਲੀ,  
ਸਭ ਥਾਈਂ ਹੋਇ ਸਹਾਇ ।

Turn your thoughts to Guru Granth Sahib, the Spirit of the ten Gurus' reciting and meditating on the *bani*, O Khalsa, call on God.

ਦਸਾਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਦਾਰ, ਪਾਠ  
ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।

Note : In the lines hereafter composed by generations of Sikhs, the events of Sikh history and reference to important *Panthic* places and the hardships and sacrifices suffered are mentioned. In this proper matter of the *Ardas*, help and assistance to face sorrows and difficulties can also be sought. Its composition excepting a few words here and there depends entirely upon the man who is praying. Except the first seven and the last two lines, the rest of the subject of the prayer can be altered, shortened, omitted or added to. There is freedom in it. The matter given below is just a sample.

Sahib Ajit Singh, Jujhar Singh, Zorawar Singh, Fateh Singh, the Five Beloved Ones, the Forty Emancipated Ones, all the martyred Singhs, men and women; think of their deeds, O Khalsa, and call on God.

ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜੁਝਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜੋਰਾਵਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਫਤਹਿ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ,  
ਚਾਲੀ ਮੁਕਤੇ, ਸਰਬ ਸਹੀਦ, ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰਕੇ  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।

Those who kept the Name in their hearts, shared their earnings with others, offered their lives for the Faith, plied the sword and practised charity, who saw others' faults but overlooked them, think of the deeds of those faithful ones, O Khalsa, and call on God.

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿਆ, ਵੰਡ ਛਕਿਆ, ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸੀਸ ਦਿੱਤੇ, ਦੇਗ ਚਲਾਈ, ਤੇਗ

ਵਾਹੀ, ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਅਣਡਿੱਠ ਕੀਤਾ ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿਦਕਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰਕੇ  
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਬੋਲੋ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।

Those who, for their faith, allowed themselves to be cut up limb by limb, were flayed alive, had their scalps scraped off, were broken on the wheel, were sawn through but remained steadfast and submitted to Thy Will and upheld their Sikh faith with their uncut hair to the last breath; think of their great deeds, O Khalsa, and call on God.

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਬੰਦ ਬੰਦ ਕਟਵਾਏ, ਪੁਠੀਆਂ ਖਲਾਂ ਲੁਹਾਈਆਂ, ਖੋਪਰੀਆਂ ਉਤਰਾਈਆਂ, ਚਰਖੜੀਆਂ ਪਰ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ, ਆਰਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਚੀਰੇ ਗਏ, ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਵਿਖੇ ਸਾਵਧਾਨ ਰਹੇ, ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਦਕ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸਵਾਸਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਭਾਇਆ, ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰਕੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਬੋਲੋ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।

May all the thrones of Sikh authority, all the temples, banners, mansions, flags, wealth abide for ever and ever; ਸਾਰੇ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਾਮ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਝੰਡੇ ਬੁੰਗੇ ਨਿਸਾਨ ਬਿਭੂਤੀ ਜੁਗੋ ਜੁਗ ਅਟਲ ।  
May *Dharam* always dominate.

ਧਰਮ ਕਾ ਜੈਕਾਰ, ਬੋਲੋ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।

Grant to the Sikhs the gift of Sikhism and grant good understanding;

ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖੀ ਦਾਨ, ਸੁੱਮਤ ਦਾਨ,

the gift of *keshas* and Thy Name with every breath;

ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਯੰਤ ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨ,

the gift of faith and confidence in Thee. Grant the great gift of the love of Thy Feet.

ਸਿਦਕ ਭਰੋਸਾ ਦਾਨ, ਮਹਾਂ ਦਾਨ, ਆਪਣੇ ਚਰਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਬਖਸ਼ ।

Let us meet those persons of love in whose company we may remember Thy Name,

ਸੇਈ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਮੇਲ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਿਲਿਆਂ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮ ਚਿਤ ਆਵੈ,

May we remember the God-Guru, the most exalted Master while keeping good health and may the Remembrance bring about peace and happiness everywhere.

ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਸੁਆਸੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੰਤਰ ਰਾਜ ਚਿਤ ਆਵੈ, ਚਿਤ ਆਵਨ ਕਾ ਸਦਕਾ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖ ਹੋਇ ।

May Your protection and indulgence extend to all the

Khalsa wherever they are;

ਜਹਾਂ ਜਹਾਂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਤਹਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਰਛਿਆ ਰਿਆਇਤ,

May victory attend our Charity and our Arms.

ਦੇਗ ਤੇਗ ਫਤਹਿ,

May the honour of His Nature be always upheld.

ਬਿਰਦ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ,

May the *Panth* always triumph,

ਪੰਥ ਕੀ ਜੀਤ,

May the Holy Sword help us.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ ।

May the Khalsa be on the Ascent.

ਖਾਲਸੇ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਬੋਲ ਬਾਲੇ,

May the hearts of the Sikhs be humble but their wisdom exalted; their wisdom and respect be in the keeping of the Timeless-Person;

ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਨ ਨੀਵਾਂ, ਮਤ ਉਚੀ, ਮਤ ਦਾ ਰਾਖਾ ਆਪ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ,

O Khalsa, call on God.

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬੋਲੋ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।

(Here the purpose and occasion for which the *Ardas* is addressed may be mentioned and the *Ardas* has to be concluded with the following two lines) :

Through Nanak may Thy Name for ever be on the ascent,

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ,

And may all men prosper by Thy grace.

ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ।

### *Some Notes and Explanation About the Above Ardas*

This sample of the formal standard Prayer of the Sikhs is not a composition of any one man at any one time. It has been worked upon by the whole *Panth* for centuries from time to time. This standard Prayer took its form after the composition of *Bhagauti-ki-Var* by the tenth Satguru. Before that the *Ardas* began with one or other quotation from the Holy Granth such as :

He Himself knows and He Himself does and He Himself sets things right.

ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਕਰੈ ਆਪਿ ਆਪੇ ਆਣੈ ਰਾਸਿ ॥

Nanak says offer Thy prayers in His august presence.

ਤਿਸੈ ਅਗੈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਖਲਿਇ ਕੀਚੈ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਰੂ, ਸਲੋਕ ਮ: ੨)

or :

With joined hands, I pray to Thee;

ਦੁਇ ਕਰ ਜੋੜਿ ਕਰਉ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥

May it be granted if it pleases you.

ਤੁਧ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਾ ਆਣਹਿ ਰਾਸਿ ॥ (ਸ਼ੁਹੀ ਮ: ੫)

or :

With the portion of Canto IV of the fifth Guru's *Sukhmani* mentioned before, beginning with :

Thou art the Master; To Thee I pray.

ਤੂੰ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥

It appears the custom of offering *Ardas* must have begun with the rise of Sikhism and developed by and by into an established rule to get together for the purpose of praying in congregation. In *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, it is mentioned that if anybody wanted to get his wish accepted, he would come to a *sangat* of the Sikhs and ask them to pray for him. History tells us that even the Satguru had asked for *Ardas* being offered for him.

When offering a prayer, a Sikh is made to realise that he is a part of the *Panth*, the Khalsa, whose past and present history is full of sacrifices, successes, deeds and glories, referred to in the *Ardas*.

When we pray we stand face to face with God. The *Ardas* reminds us that to achieve the presence and communion we have to cover common ground with those who have approached Him and traversed with so much sufferings and sacrifices. We have to realise the picture of their steadfast faith and fortify our minds with their patient strength and devotion and resignation. *Ardas* is meant to refresh and lift our spirits high (ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ), prepare us to be ready to do the Master's Will. To be a part of the gathering of God-conscious persons is the best way to do it. A Sikh *Ardas* begins with an invocation to God. The highest ideal of godliness, according to the Sikhs, was realised in Guru Nanak and his nine successors. Therefore, they are mentioned next. Then the Five Beloved Ones, who for their sacrifice were invested with collective Guruship by the tenth Guru; then the Guru's sons, who bravely



attained martyrdom and, though young, kept up the brave tradition of their forefathers; then other great men and women, who wore arms and practised charity, and in the face of unspeakable suffering kept their faith unsullied. This part of the prayer is the work of the whole community, past and present, and is most vigorous in style and language.

How many hearts in these long centuries it has soothed in affliction and braved in difficulties ! It bears the stamp of all that is best and most moving in Sikhism. It is the crystallisation of the Sikh Nation's history. It is a living monument to its greatness, which generation after generation of the Sikhs will repeat to themselves to keep alive the old fire in their midst.

When offering *Ardas*, some people, sometimes, feel shy to say out what they wish for. In Sikhism both spiritual and worldly responsibilities have to be fulfilled and advancement made. The Satguru has not only kept it open for a person to pray for his worldly demands, wishes, and advancement but has encouraged us to express and say out what is in our mind to the Almighty from Whom nothing is hidden. The fifth Guru in *Var Gajari* says :

Whatever there is in your mind to be submitted, say it out in *Ardas* to the Master.

ਜੀਅ ਕੀ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਗੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਕਰਿ ॥

Giving up all your cleverness, surrender your mind and body to the Master.

ਫੋਡਿ ਸਿਆਣਪ ਸਗਲ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਅਰਪਿ ਧਰਿ ॥

The fifth Guru explains in plain words in *Rag Kahnra*, this idea as such :

O Creator, you are my Benefactor; there is everything in Thy Hand.

ਸਾਜਨੇ ਤੂ ਮੀਤੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਤੇਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇਹੁ ॥

I crave for honour and crave for power and strength and wealth, goodly wife, riches, son, and body to work in.

ਮਾਨੁ ਮਾਂਗਉ, ਤਾਨੁ ਮਾਂਗਉ, ਧਨੁ ਲਖਮੀ ਸੁਤ ਦੇਹੁ ॥

The tenth Satguru has, in his prayer *Chaupai*, that we daily recite during *Rehras* in the evenings and also read while *Amrit* is being prepared, given us the lead on this point when he says :

O God, extend Thy Hand and protect me.

ਹਮਰੀ ਕਰੋ ਹਾਥਿ ਦੇ ਰੱਛਾ ।

And may my desires be fulfilled.

ਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਇ ਚਿੱਤ ਕੀ ਇੱਛਾ ।

May my heart be ever attached to Thy Feet.

ਤਵ ਚਰਨਨ ਮਨ ਰਹੈ ਹਮਾਰਾ ।

Deem me Thy own and cherish me.

ਅਪਣਾ ਜਾਣ ਕਰੋ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰਾ ।

Destroy all my enemies.

ਹਮਰੇ ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭੇ ਤੁਮ ਘਾਵਹੁ ।

With Your Protective Hand save me.

ਆਪੁ ਹਾਥ ਦੈ ਮੋਹਿ ਬਚਾਵਹੁ ।

O Creator, may my family and my servants and disciples,  
Sikhs, all live in peace and happiness.

ਸੁਖੀ ਬਸੈ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾ । ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਭੇ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ ।

In the Sikh prayer, most of the sufferings and martyrdoms referred to are the happenings during the conflict with the Mughal rulers. It will be worth noting that no where in it are there any signs of bitterness or revenge. There is even no reproach or curse on the enemy, only the sufferings are enumerated. In the end of the *Ardas*, we pray for the good and welfare of everybody without distinction of caste or creed, friend or foe.

The background and explanation of some of the words used in *Ardas* is listed below :

### *Bhagauti*

*Bhagauti* means God. It does not mean goddess Durga. In this *Var*, *Bhagauti* is described as the Creator of Durga and others like Brahma, Vishnu, Shiv, Ram, Krishan, etc. The tenth Satguru has used the word *Bhagauti* for Sword or God, and God is often referred to as Sword. He has very clearly said in *Rag Kalyan* :

Worship none but the Creator, not a thing made by Him.

ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨ ਕਿਰਤਮ ਮਾਨੋ ।

Know that He Who was in the beginning, unborn, invincible, and indestructable, is God.

ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨਿ, ਅਜੈ, ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ, ਤਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸਰ ਜਾਨੋ ।

### *Call on Sangat*

When this call is made the whole gathering exclaims *Waheguru* in response with religious fervour.

### *The Four Sons of the Tenth Guru*

Sahibzadas Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh received martyrdom during the battle of Chamkaur on December 22, 1704, and Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh were taken to Sirhind where they were tortured and bricked alive and martyred on December 27, 1704.

### *Five Beloved Ones*

They were the first Five Persons to offer their heads to the Satguru at his call and were the first to be initiated as the Khalsa. The Guru himself received initiation from them. The Guruship was thus transferred and entrusted to the Khalsa under the Supreme instructions of *Gurbani*. This was in 1699.

### *Forty Emancipated Ones*

In 1701, during the siege of Anandpur, some Sikhs deserted the Guru. On reaching their homes, their women reproached them and made them repent. Finally, forty of them were taken back by Mai Bhago (Lady Bhag Kaur) and at Muktsar, they were all killed while fighting the enemy. Later when the Satguru came to know of it, he was greatly moved and at the request of a dying Sikh, Bhai Maha Singh, he tore up the paper on which they had written their disclaimer that he was not their Guru, and thus forgave them.

### *Takhts*

Takhts are seats of Sikh religious authority. They are situated at Amritsar (Akal Takht), at Anandpur (Takht Kesgarh), at Nanded (Takht Hazur Sahib) and at Patna. Now the fifth one has been created at Talwandi Sabo (Takht Damdama Sahib).

### *Offering the Heads*

In practice, this became offering their lives for the faith and

cause. After the fifth, ninth and tenth Satgurus and, four Sahibzadas, who sacrificed their lives, there were innumerable Sikhs who followed their example, led by the Five Beloved Ones. Most of them met their end while wielding the sword for the *dharam*. Sikh history is full of their valorous deeds.

### *Practice of Charity*

The foundation of it was laid at the very inception of Sikhism. The first Satguru when settled down at Kartarpur on the banks of the Ravi, started the system of *langar* where the visitors who came for his audience and anyone who was hungry could take their meals free. During the second Satguru's time this system became known far and wide. The third Satguru gave such an importance to *langar* where everyone ate sitting in a line irrespective of caste or creed or being high or low, that an injunction was issued that everyone who came to have the Satguru's audience, must first have food in *langar*. Even when Emperor Akbar came, he too sat in *langar*, took his meals and then saw the Guru. This system has spread to almost all the Sikh worship places, gurdwaras of note throughout the world wherever Sikhs happen to be. Besides gurdwaras, some important Sikhs also were enjoined by the Satguru to run such institutions. For example, the sixth Satguru enjoined upon Bhai Rup Chand to run such an institution when establishing the centre of Sikh Mission at Bhai Rupa village in the Malwa area under his charge. Upto this day, besides Bhai Rupa itself there are several of Bhai Rup Chand's descendants who are running such institutions. Two such *langars* at Dyalpura Bhai ka and at Bagrian are especially known. The big long spoon, *karchha*, with which *dal* is distributed, which was given to Bhai Rup Chand along with a double-edged sword by the Guru, *khanda*, are in my proud possession amongst some other sacred relics at Bagrian.

### *Cut up Limb by Limb*

This refers to the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh in 1738. He was the most learned and revered Sikh of the time. He had been initiated into the Khalsa order by the tenth Satguru himself. At the time of his martyrdom, he occupied the high position of

*granthi*, in charge of the Golden Temple, where he was sent by Mata Sundri, the widow of Guru Gobind Singh. In 1738, Bhai Mani Singh sought permission from the Lahore authorities to hold the Diwali fair. This was granted on the condition that a tax of Rs. 5,000/- will be paid to the treasury of the Governor of Lahore after the fair. Bhai Mani Singh smelt a rat and coming to know that it was a deceitful ruse to destroy the visiting Sikhs whom Bhai Sahib had invited from far and near. The fair was consequently not held. Bhai Mani Singh was arrested for not paying the tax. He was, as usual, offered the alternative of either to accept Islam or meet his death. He stoutly refused to barter his religion, for his life. His body was ordered cut limb by limb.

### *Scalps Scraped off*

Bhai Taru Singh was a resident of Poohla in the Bari Duab. He was a pious young man of 25 and devoted to the *Panth*. Whatever he could produce, he offered to his Sikh brothers who had taken refuge in the forests. This was taken as treason. Being betrayed by one Harbhagat Naranjania of Jandiala (now in district Amritsar), Bai Taru Singh was arrested and taken to Lahore in 1750, where he was asked to embrace Islam or to cut his *kes* (hair). Rather than allow his *kes* cut, he suffered forcible descalping.

### *Broken on the Wheels*

This refers to the martyrdom of Subeg Singh and Shahbaz Singh and others. Shahbaz Singh was a boy who used to study in a school under a *Qazi* who wanted to convert him to Islam. The boy refused. They put pressure on his father, Subeg Singh, but he too stoutly refused. Both the father and son were broken on the torture-wheel in 1743.

### *Sawn Alive*

Bhai Mati Dass, was a devoted follower of the ninth Satguru, Guru Teg Bahadur. He was one of those who accompanied the ninth Guru to Delhi where the Satguru was beheaded and Bhai Mati Das was sawn alive. This was in 1675.

## POSTSCRIPT

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The Sikh way is summed up in these lines by the Satguru in  
*Rag Bilawal* :

All beings are under Your protection and so is all care  
and worry with You.

ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਸਰਣਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ, ਸਰਬ ਚਿੰਤ ਤੁਧੁ ਪਾਸਿ ॥

Whatever pleases You is best, Nanak only makes the  
request. We have only to put our requests before Him  
and leave the result to His pleasure.